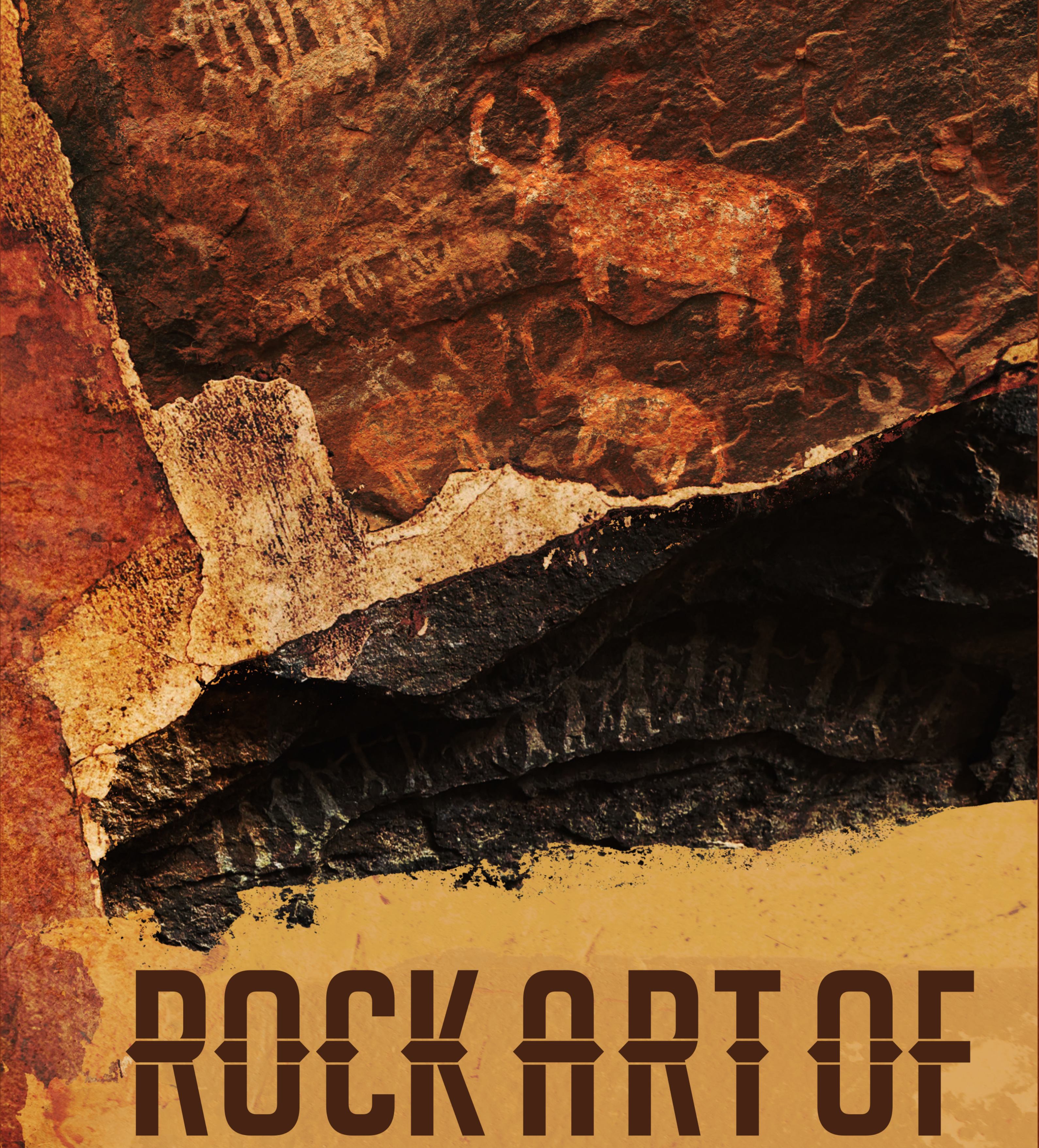

ROCK ART OF TAMIL NADU

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

ROCK ART OF TAMIL NADU

Volume I

K.Rajan
R.Sivanantham

Government of Tamil Nadu
Department of Archaeology
2026

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Thiru Thangam Thenarasu

Honourable Minister for Finance,
Environment Climate Change and Archaeology

Foreword

Rock Art is considered one of the earliest forms of human artistic expression. The stylistic countenance and thematic contents are beautifully expressed on the surface of the rock shelters in the form of petrographs and petroglyphs. Archaeologists try to understand these paintings and bruising as part of cultural evolution. They try to reconstruct the social and cultural life of prehistoric man through close observation of the spectrum. In India, prehistoric paintings are being discovered throughout the length and breadth of the country, spanning from Palaeolithic times to the Early Historic period. In Tamil Nadu, paintings have been noticed from the time of Neolithic period. Since the first discovery of rock paintings in 1867-68 by Archibald Carlleyle in Sohagi Ghat in the Mirzapur district of the Kaimur ranges of the Bihar region, several rock art sites have been brought to light in different parts of India. However, the discovery of rock paintings at Bhimbetka in 1957 by V.S. Wakankar made a tremendous impact on the study of rock art in India. The year 1978 is considered the turning point in the history of rock art studies in Tamil Nadu. The discovery of rock paintings at Mallapadi in Krishnagiri District by Prof. K.V. Raman of Madras University opened a new vista in the study of rock art of Tamil Nadu. Since then, more than 200 rock art sites have been brought to light, and we hope this numerical data will change soon, as numerous enthusiasts are working hard to discover more rock art sites in several parts of Tamil Nadu. The Department of Archaeology decided to consolidate these finest findings. A multi-disciplinary team is formed and given the task of documenting these ancient human expressions. The results of the constant effort are now in the hands of scholars and the general public to estimate the cultural values of this art tradition.

Prof. K.Rajan and Dr. R.Sivanantham, authors of the book, coordinated and interacted with the multi-disciplinary team and took earnest efforts in documenting the rock art of Tamil Nadu by taking frequent field trips to the inaccessible terrains. Their dedication and involvement in the field are reflected in the present monograph. Wholeheartedly, I congratulate the authors and the entire team for their immense contribution in bringing out the volume in a short period and placing the past before the future generation. I do hope the scholarly world will appreciate and encourage the Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department to venture into such academic activities for the benefit of the nation.

T. Udhayachandran, I.A.S.,
Additional Chief Secretary to Government
Commissioner (FAC)
Department of Archaeology

Foreword

The study of rock paintings has great relevance in the context of art and human manifestations. Rock art is considered the future of the past, particularly in the realm of art. This human creativity cannot be judged by mechanical assertion and statistical counts rather by understanding its complexity and richness through constant observation and absorption. The psycho-analytical and ethnographical approaches are being followed vigorously in the study of rock art to understand the artistic traditions of the nation. The artistic manifestations emanating from humans' primary sensory perceptions are considered one of the hallmarks of past societies. Therefore, rock art is considered one of the cultural resources of the nation. The Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department has initiated the process of documenting the rock paintings and bruisings of Tamil Nadu to preserve them for posterity. Beyond exploring, discovering, documenting and protecting the rock art sites, the multidisciplinary team attempts to understand the human expressions in the given cultural context. More than two hundred rock art sites have been discovered and several sites are being added every year to the list due to the involvement of art enthusiasts. The Government takes earnest interest in documenting the remaining rock art sites, and we hope in the near future, the information on all rock art sites will be placed before scholars for their academic scrutiny and the public to appreciate the cultural value of the art. The present monograph carries information on forty-six rock art sites as a result of the first phase of documentation. I congratulate the authors and the multi-disciplinary team members for the well-planned academic exercise by overcoming the physical stress in the field. I am sure this volume will receive accolades from the fellow academicians, enthusiasts, art historians and lay readers.

The Team

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Mr. P. Tamil Vendhan, *Videographer, Tamil Virtual Academy*

Mr. N. Nareshkumar, *3D Scanner, Pondicherry*

Preface

The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology has initiated an ambitious project of documenting the rock art of Tamil Nadu. Both professionals and amateurs have reported several stray discoveries, but proper documentation by the specialists is lacking. More than 250 rock art sites have been reported since the first discovery made at Mallapadi in 1978 near Krishnagiri. Several rock art sites are being added to the list, thanks to archaeologists and enthusiasts. In the course of time, it is felt that the documentation should reflect the perspectives of different categories of scholars so that one could get a holistic view of the nature of rock art. A multi-disciplinary team consisting of archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, folklorists, geologists, environmentalists and literary men have been formed to undertake a field trip to observe the rock art in situ from their perspectives without being influenced by the theories of one discipline on another. The perceptions of each specialist have been collected, collated and consolidated to get a panoramic view. The present monograph echoes the collective wisdom of the team. During the documentation, it is felt that many of the rock paintings were either faded or eroded or defaced or vandalised over the ravages of time. In most of the paintings, the hidden images are hardly visible to the naked eye, particularly in superimposed paintings. To overcome these deficiencies, a team comprising the technical staff specialized in AutoCAD, DStretch and 3D-Scanner has been formed to trace, photograph, videograph and scan the paintings in situ so that the true picture of the paintings could be retrieved and reproduced with near accuracy. The entire team, consisting of both experts and technicians, was deployed in the field to document the paintings located in the deep forest and inaccessible areas. It is felt that mere documentation of paintings may not help; rather contextualizing the paintings within chronological and cultural settings is vital to visualize the cultural evolution and transformation of past societies. Therefore, the cultural context of each site has been given priority and the archaeological settings of the sites are closely observed. These multiple tasks naturally slowed down the progress of the documentation. As a result, the present monograph carries the information of merely 46 rock art sites, accounting for one-fifth of the reported sites, and the remaining 80% the rock sites need to be documented. We earnestly hope that future generations will take care of documenting the remaining rock art sites before they are completely erased from mother earth.

K.Rajan

R.Sivanantham

Acknowledgements

The present volume *Rock Art of Tamil Nadu* is an outcome of a team effort consist of experts and technicians drawn from different fields. Many people contributed to get the final shape of the volume. This multi-tasking and multi-faceted nature of the work needs massive financial and administrative supports. Thiru. Thangam Thenarasu, Honourable Minister for Finance, Environment Climate Change and Archaeology played a significant role in initiating this documentation project. We are so grateful to him for his continuous academic support that reflected in completing the first phase of the documentation work in time.

We would like to thank Dr. K. Manivasan, IAS., Additional Chief Secretary to Government and Principal Secretary to Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department for the sustained support in executing the work. He always serves as a source of inspiration. Without his blessings, the volume would not have seen the light of the day.

The next great source of inspiration is Thiru. T. Udhayachandran, IAS., Principal Secretary to Government, Finance Secretary and Commissioner (FAC) of Archaeology. He deserves special gratitude for his guidance and encouragement. He motivated the entire team through his sustained support to unravel the past hidden in the Eastern and Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu. We are ever grateful to him for making this team effort as an historic event.

The members of the Team are to be remembered for the positive outcome. They shouldered the responsibility of accompanying us in the tedious field work and expressing their views on the paintings in the back drop of their domain knowledge. Without their great academic support and input, we would have not completed our report. Their experience and knowledge adequately reflected in the report. We gratefully acknowledge their cooperation and support.

In any documentation work, the contribution of technical staff is enormous. We would like to thank the technical team Mr. M. Nareshkumar (3D Scanner), Mr. Santhosh, (Photographer) and Mr. Tamil Vendhan (Videographer) for on the field and off the field support. Several independent researchers voluntarily came forward to join us in the field. By engulfing all the difficulties, they helped us in many ways to record the rock paintings. Among them, Dr. T.Subramanian of Dharmapuri, Mr. Sadasivam of Gudimallam, Mr. Palanisamy of Tiruvannamalai, Mr. Balamurugan of Tiruvannamalai, Forest Ranger Mr. Ganesh of Solurmattam need a special mention for their kind help.

We would like to thank all the village people who assisted us in the field by providing the moral and physical support.

Our special thanks to experts Prof. Ravi Korisettar and Prof. Ajit Kumar for reviewing the final copy and for their valuable suggestions.

Finally, extended thanks to our District Archaeological Officers K. Suresh, Nilgiri District, Mr. R. Barathkumar, Dindigul District, Mr. M. Ramesh, Madurai District, Mrs. K. Bakialakshmi, Kallakurichi District, Mr. S. Parandhaman, Krishnagiri District and Mrs. R. Kaviya, Tiruppur District who accompanied us during our field work in the respective districts. A great support to be remembered forever.

At the time of compilation of the report, Mr. P. Arunkumar (Data analysis), Mr. S.R. Elanthendral (DStretch, Data-Analysis) Mr. R. Kumaresan (AutoCAD), Ms.V. Shanmuga Easwari (Data analysis, Auto CAD), Ms. R. Dhivya (Data analysis), Mr. G. Manikandan (Data analysis), Mr. R. Jeyasuriya (GIS), Mr. K.V. K. Mullai Venthan (AutoCAD), Ms. Akshatha A (Auto CAD), Ms. S. Kowsalya (Auto CAD) and Ms. Nandhni V (Auto CAD) helped to consolidate the data. We gratefully acknowledge their contribution in shaping the report.

We gratefully acknowledge and faithfully thank from the bottom of our hearts those who have unconditionally and enthusiastically helped in different ways to accomplish the task.

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Chapter -1

ROCK ART AND ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT - AN INTRODUCTION

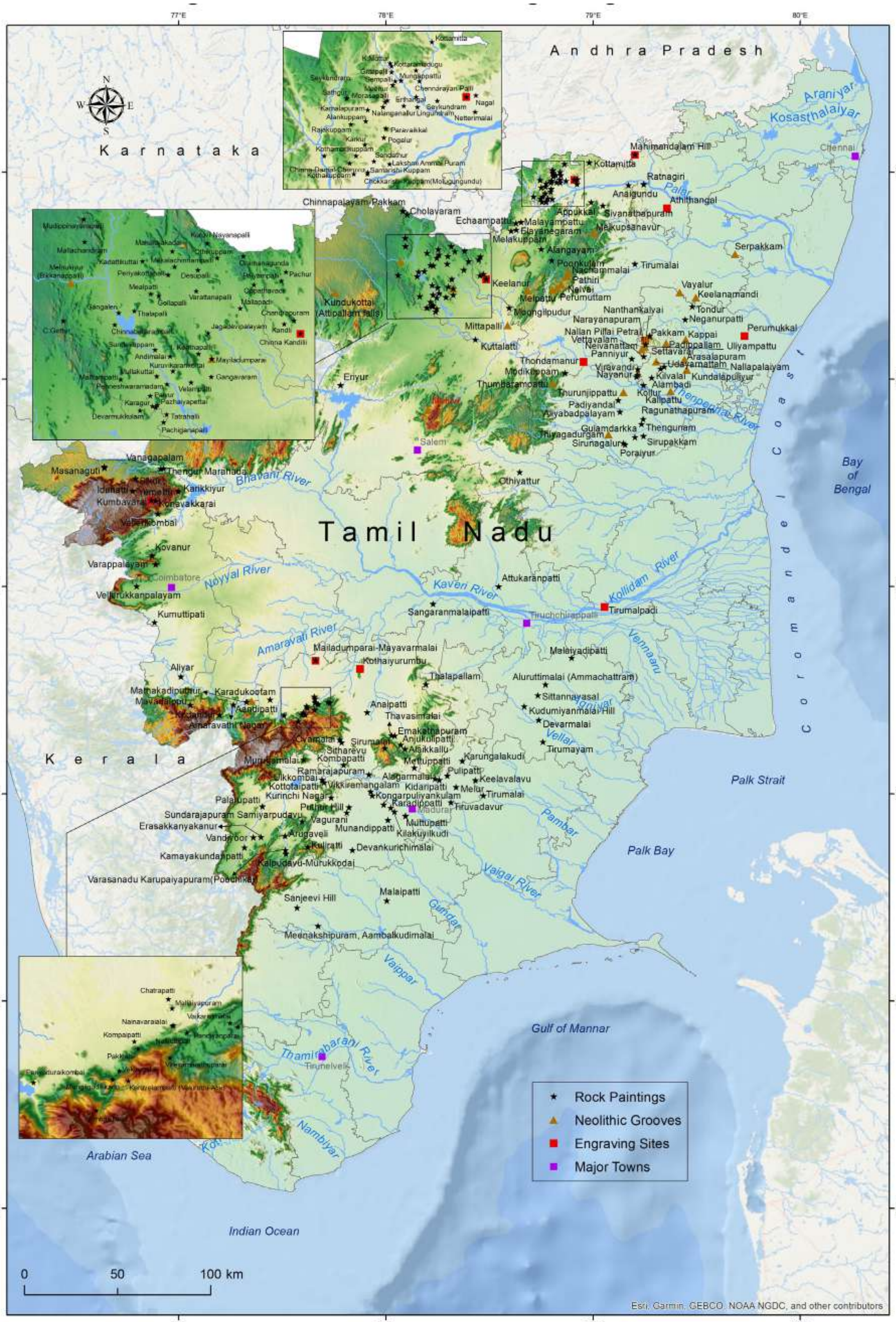
Chapter -1

ROCK ART AND ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT - AN INTRODUCTION

Rock art is a form of expression by past communities reflecting their way of life, subsistence patterns, belief system, thought processes, philosophy of life and their interactions with the surrounding environment. Rock art sometimes illustrates the cultural transformation of past societies, particularly the shift from hunter-gatherer to agro-pastoral stages of life. Rock art studies in Tamil Nadu generally cover a period from Neolithic times to Iron Age broadly spanning from 5th millennium BCE to 6th century BCE, although a few rock art sites are dated to Early Historic period as well. During this period, humans transitioned from being food-gatherers (Palaeolithic period) to food producers (Neolithic period) and subsequently to the metal age (Iron Age). As a result, when the researchers confront with rock art they attempt to understand the total concept of life of the past communities based on the location of the rock shelters and content of the rock paintings. Rock art, therefore, is not just about expressing 'things,' but also transcendent ideas, sublime thoughts and cultural values. Rock art serves as an important source of material for understanding the cognitive world of past societies through their dynamic expressions. This non-verbal language, communicated through an everlasting medium, provides insights into the world of the past.

In recent years, the study of rock art in Tamil Nadu has attracted the attention of many academicians, artists and amateurs from different fields. The curiosity in rock art studies in Tamil Nadu has resulted in the discovery of more than two hundred fifty sites with paintings (petrographs) and engravings (petroglyphs) executed on the surface of rock-shelters and the Iron Age (megalithic) graves, particularly the dolmens (Maps 1.1-1.3; Appendix 1.1 and 1.5). Some of the rock art sites are associated with Neolithic sites and Neolithic Celt production centres represented by grooves. For instance, sites such as Settavarai and Mayiladumparai could be cited (Map 1.4; Figs. 1.1 and 1.2).

A large number of rock art sites were brought to light in the northern parts of Tamil Nadu particularly in the regions of Vellore, Dharmapuri (Map 1.5) and Tiruvannamalai (Map 1.6). In the central part, dense concentrations can be seen on the slopes of the Western Ghats of the Nilgris, Anjunad valley, Udumalaipettai and in Lower Palani hills overlooking the Kongu region (Map 1.7). However, in the Madurai region rock art sites are relatively fewer in number (Map 1.8). Unlike in the northern part of India, where the rock art dates back to the later Palaeolithic times, South Indian rock art seems to have first appeared during the Mesolithic times and continued through the Neolithic, Iron Age, and the Early Historic times.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Pathiri
Neivai
Melpattu Perumuttam
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Thurunjippattu
Padiyandal
Ragunathapuram
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Gulamdarkka
Thengunam
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Sirunagalur
Sirupakkam
Poraiyur
Mittapalli
Kuttalatti
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Kothaiyurumbu
Thalapallam
Malaiyadipatti
Aluruttimalai (Ammachattram)
Sittannavasal
Kudumiyanmalai Hill
Devarmalai
Tirumayam
Aliyar
Mathakadipudur
Karadukootam
Mavadaippu
Kandipatti
Amaravathi Nagar
Analpatti
Thavasimalai
Emakalnapuram
Anjukulipatti
Alsikkallu
Sirumalai
Sitharevu
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Murugamalai
Mettupatti
Karungalakudi
Pulipatti
Ramarajapuram
Ukkombai
Alagarmalai
Keelavalavu
Kottotaipatti
Vikkiramangalam
Kidaripatti
Melur
Kurinchi Nagar
Kongarpuliyankulam
Tirumalai
Palanipatti
Pulipur Hill
Karadipatti
Tiruvadavur
Sundarajapuram
Samiyarpudavu
Vagurani
Muttupatti
Erasakkanyakanur
Munandippatti
Kilakuyilkudi
Vandiyoor
Arugaveli
Kallratti
Devankurichimalai
Kamayakundanpatti
Kalpugayu-Murukkodai
Varasanadu Karupaiyapuram(Poochikal)
Sanjeevi Hill
Malaipatti
Meenakshipuram, Aambalkudimalai
Rock Paintings
Neolithic Grooves
Engraving Sites
Major Towns
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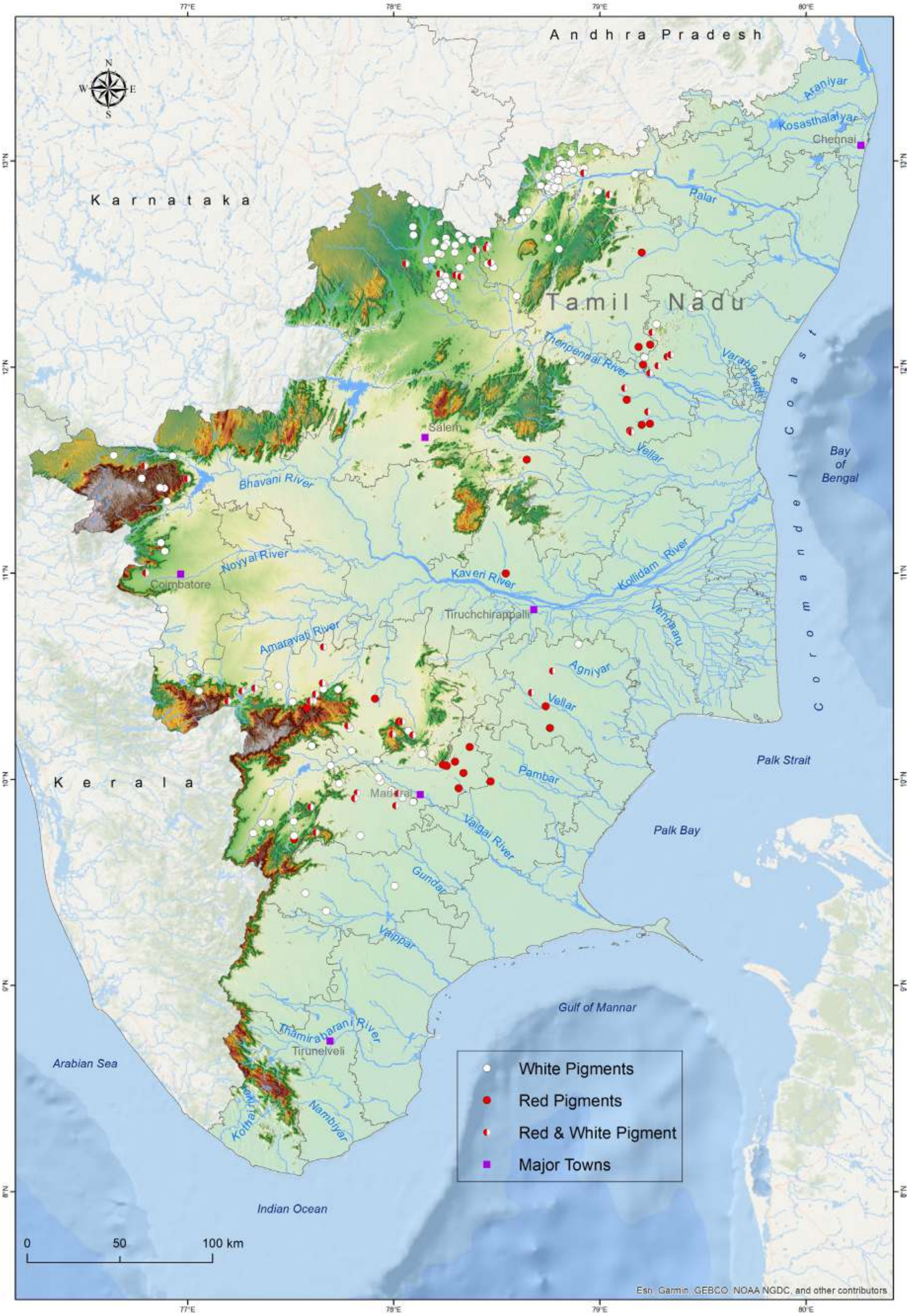
Map 1.1 Rock art sites in Tamil Nadu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Madurai
Vaigai River
Gundar
Vaippar
Thamirabarani River
Tirunelveli
Kothaiyar
Nambiyar
Coromandel Coast
Bay of Bengal
Palk Strait
Palk Bay
Gulf of Mannar
Arabian Sea
Indian Ocean
○ White Pigments
● Red Pigments
◐ Red & White Pigment
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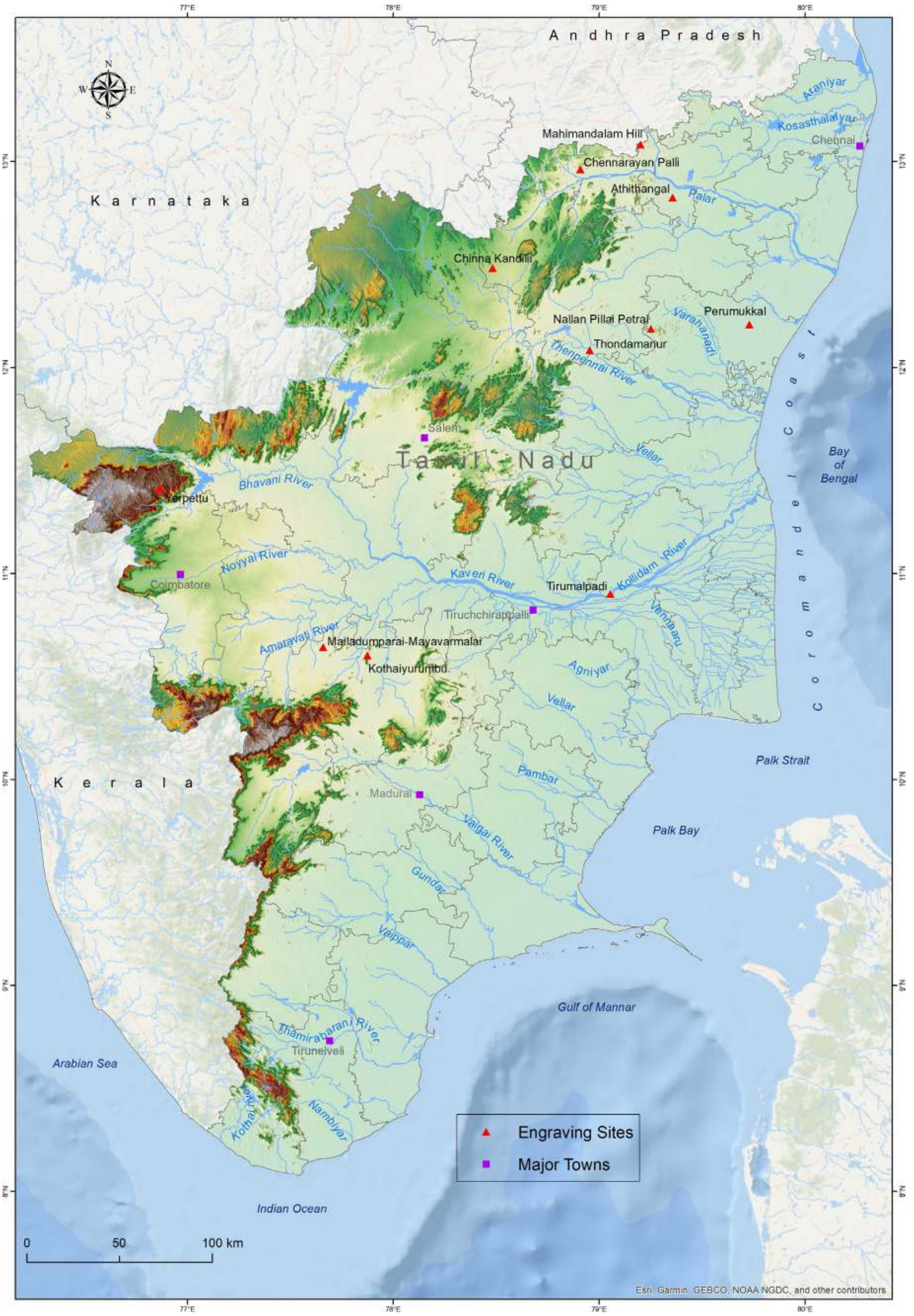
Map 1.2 Rock painting sites in Tamil Nadu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Tamil Nadu
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Athithangal
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Kosasthalaiyar
Palar
Chinna Kandili
Nallan Pillai Petral
Perumukkal
Thondamanur
Varahanadi
Thenpennai River
Salem
Vellar
Bay of Bengal
Coromandel Coast
Bhavani River
Yerpettu
Noyyal River
Coimbatore
Kaveri River
Tirumalpadi
Kollidam River
Tiruchchirappalli
Vennaru
Amaravati River
Mailadumparai-Mayavarmalai
Kothaiyurumbu
Agniyar
Vellar
Palk Strait
Pambar
Madurai
Palk Bay
Vaigai River
Gundar
Vaippar
Gulf of Mannar
Thamirabarani River
Tirunelveli
Arabian Sea
Kothai
Nambiyar
Engraving Sites
Major Towns
Indian Ocean
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100 km
Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

Map 1.3 Rock engraving sites in Tamil Nadu

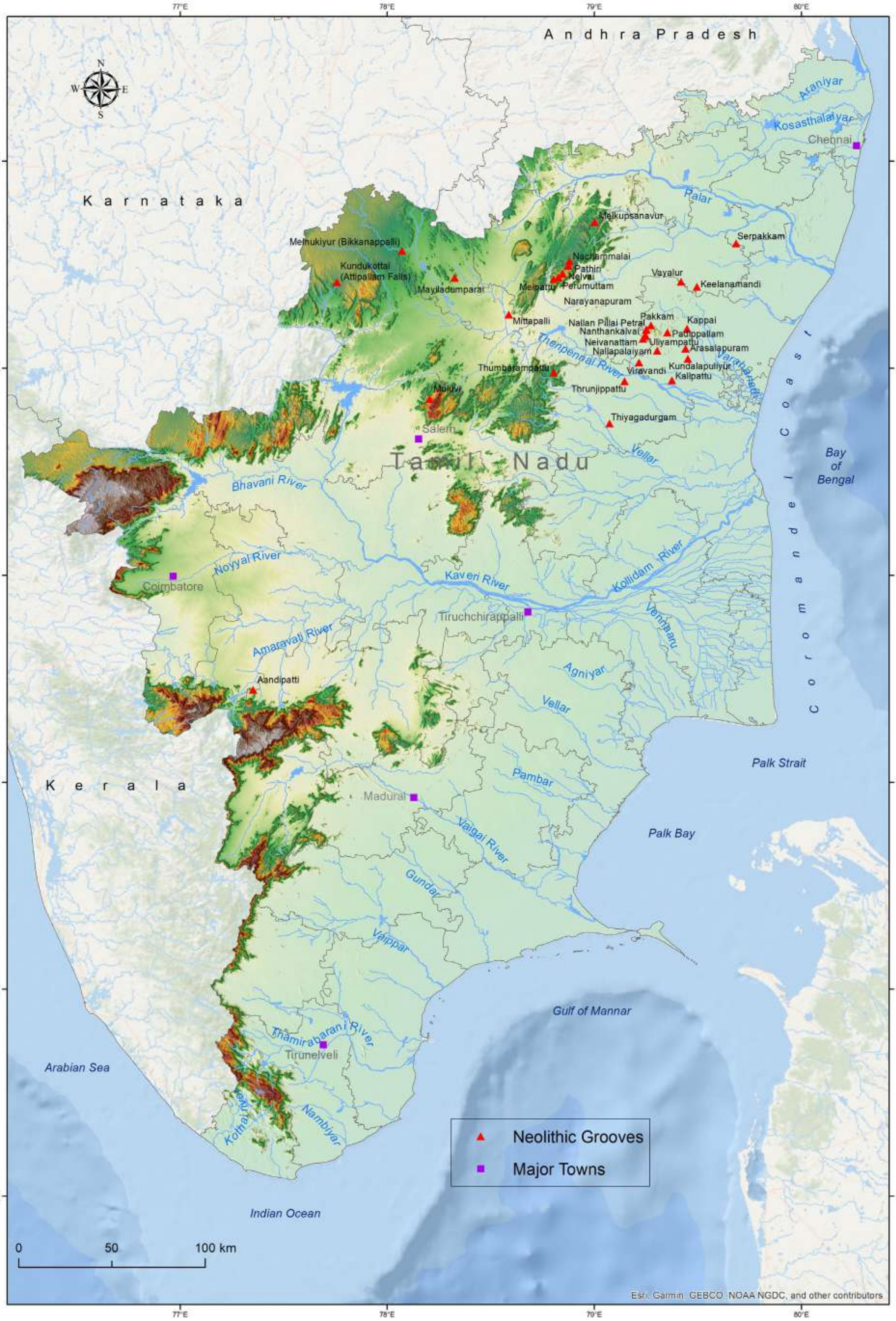
History of Research

Since the first discovery of rock paintings in 1867-68 by Archibald Carlleyle in Sohagi Ghat in the Mirzapur district of the Kaimur ranges of the Bihar region, several rock art sites have been brought to light in different parts of India (Carlleyle 1883. 1885). John Cockburn, a contemporary of Carlleyle, working in the Banda and Mirzapur districts published the first drawings of the rock art (Cockburn 1889; Wakankar 2005:2). Though several sites were identified, they were sporadic in nature, like the one discovered by Fawcett in 1901 at Edakkal in the Wayanad region of Kerala. Fawcett's discovery is unique as Edakkal is the only site that represents rock engravings on a massive scale and also it remained the only site till the discovery of Perumukkal, Settavarai (Nallanpillaiperral) and Thondamanur sites in Tamil Nadu (Figs. 1.3-1.5).

The study of rock art in Tamil Nadu and Kerala as a discipline emerged only in the post-independence era. The discovery of the cluster of painted shelters at Bhimbetka in 1957 by V.S. Wakankar made a tremendous impact on the study of rock art in India (Wakankar 2005). The discovery of rock paintings at Mallapadi in Dharmapuri District by K.V. Raman in 1978 opened a new vista in the study of rock art of Tamil Nadu (Raman 1978:50; 1981:16-24). Pon. Arasu took initiatives under the direction of R. Nagasamy and documented nearly ten sites in the area in and around Tirukkoyilur of South Arcot region. However, the discovery of Kilvalai paintings near Villupuram which featured certain graffiti marks identical to the Harappan/Indus script by Bagur Kuppusamy in the year 1984 generated great interest among archaeologists and linguists (Samy 1984). Following this, archaeological officers posted in different districts made considerable efforts to locate rock paintings.

For instance, R. Poongundran discovered several sites in the Nilgiri hills. Likewise, R. Krishnamurthi discovered paintings on the inner surface of the orthostats of the dolmens at Maharajakadai and Mallachandram. This discovery provided a new direction for our understanding. Until the discovery of dolmen paintings, the rock shelter paintings were hypothetically associated with microlithic, Neolithic or Iron Age sites. But the paintings executed on the inner surface of the orthostats, generally against the porthole of the dolmen put to rest about its possible age. The dolmen paintings also suggested that the white pigment might be associated with the Iron Age culture. V. Vedachalam while documenting the Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions engraved on the rock shelters associated with Jain beds brought to light a few sites in Madurai region. His findings suggested that earlier rock shelters occupied by the prehistoric and protohistoric communities were re-occupied by the Jain monks. R. Poundurai (1986) of Tamil University consolidated the available data on rock art and published a monograph. Pulavar Duraisamy, a school teacher of Kaveripakkam, discovered several rock art sites in Dharmapuri district between 1986 and 1988. Pulavar Duraisamy was involved in a mango plantation and also in marketing mango fruits. As a result, he discovered several sites in a mango-growing area. But due to his limited knowledge, he largely ignored the associated cultural materials. To address this issue, K.Rajan in association with Pulavar Duraisamy and T. Subramanian carried out surveys in the region and placed certain sites within a definite chronological framework (Rajan 1997). For a period of fifteen years, between 1990 and 2005, there was a lull in rock art research. Only a few sites were added to the list. However, the Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department initiated a programme to re-survey and document all the available rock art sites in Tamil Nadu and the consolidated report has been published (Sridhar 2005). However, between 2005 and 2007 a few researchers like K.T. Gandhirajan, R.N. Kumaran, M. Saranya and K. Kumar brought to light several sites (Kumar 2005a, 2005b; Valliyammal 2005). K.T. Gandhirajan surveyed in and around Kollegal taluk of Nilgiri district and brought to light one of the largest rock art sites at Karikkiyur near Kollegal in Nilgiri hills. K. Kumar surveyed in Vellore region and reported several sites. R.N. Kumaran and M. Saranya as a part of their Ph.D programme identified rock art sites for the first time in the Palani hills of Kodaikanal. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts undertook an ambitious project of documenting the rock art of Tamil Nadu in association with K.Rajan in the year 2008-2009. Local enthusiasts like Sadasivam Gudimallam and Palanisamy of Tiruvannamalai also discovered several rock art sites in the Kongu region and Tiruvannamalai region of Tamil Nadu respectively. N.Arul Murugan listed the rock art sites of the Pudukkottai region (2014). T.Subramanian of Dharmapuri (2021) and Bala Bharathi of Trichirappalli (2023) revisited some of the rock art sites of Tamil Nadu and published. Despite these ‘discoveries’, rock art study in Tamil Nadu lacked a systematic approach including faithful documentation and micro-level analysis. This scenario is due to the lack of data on the cultural context of the sites, as limited excavations have been conducted at the sites yielding rock art. The excavations at Paiyampalli, Mallapadi and Mayiladumparai have helped to ascertain the association of rock with their cultural context. However, the contextual position of each representation within a complex and the inter and intra-regional association of these expressions are yet to be properly studied and understood.

In order to understand the rock art in proper archaeological and cultural contexts, the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology initiated an ambitious project to document the gamut rock art sites of Tamil Nadu in the year 2021. A multi-disciplinary team consisting of archaeologist, historian, anthropologists, geologist, folklorist and supportive technical experts weas formed. Out of 239 reported sites, 47 sites including 92 rock-shelters with paintings/engravings were documented in the first phase (Appendix 1.6). The outcome of the documentation work is presented here.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Karnataka
Kerala
Tamil Nadu
Araniyar
Kosasthalaiyar
Chennai
Palar
Melkupsanavur
Serpakkam
Melnukiyur (Bikkanappalli)
Kundukottai
(Attipallam Falls)
Mayiladumparai
Nachammalai
Pathiri
Nelvai
Melpattu
Perumuttam
Vayalur
Keelanamandi
Narayanapuram
Mittapalli
Pakkam
Kappai
Nallan Pillai Petral
Nanthankalvai
Padippallam
Neivanattam
Uliyampattu
Nallapalaiyam
Arasalapuram
Thenpennai River
Varahanadi
Thumbarampattu
Viravandi
Kundalapuliyur
Kallpattu
Thrunjippattu
Molluvi
Thiyagadurgam
Salem
Vellar
Bay of Bengal
Coromandel Coast
Bhavani River
Noyyal River
Coimbatore
Kaveri River
Kollidam River
Tiruchchirappalli
Vennaaru
Amaravati River
Agniyar
Aandipatti
Vellar
Palk Strait
Pambar
Madurai
Palk Bay
Vaigai River
Gundar
Vaippar
Gulf of Mannar
Thamirabarani River
Tirunelveli
Arabian Sea
Kothai
Nambiyar
Neolithic Grooves
Major Towns
Indian Ocean
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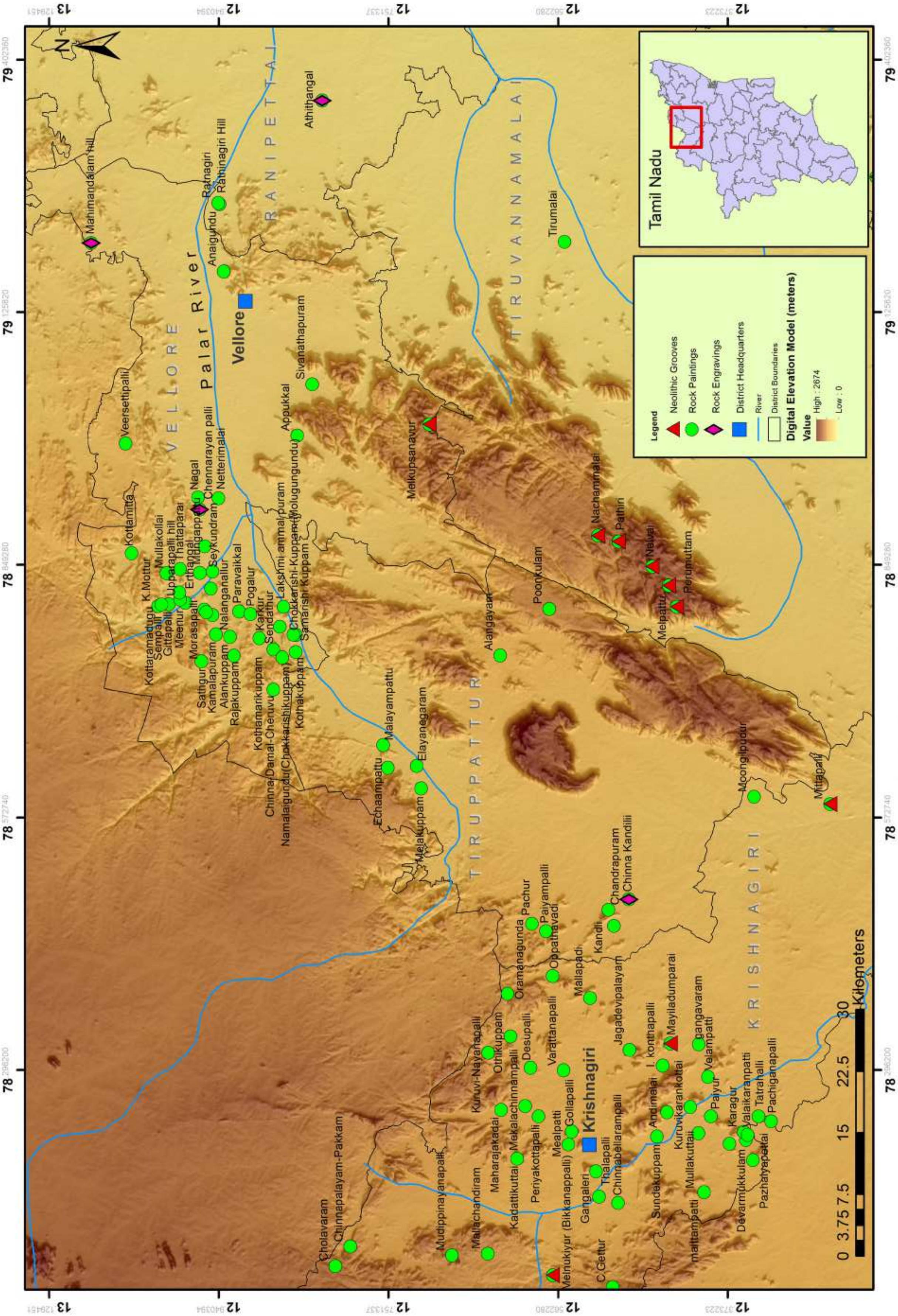
50
100 km
Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

Map 1.4 Neolithic groove sites in Tamil Nadu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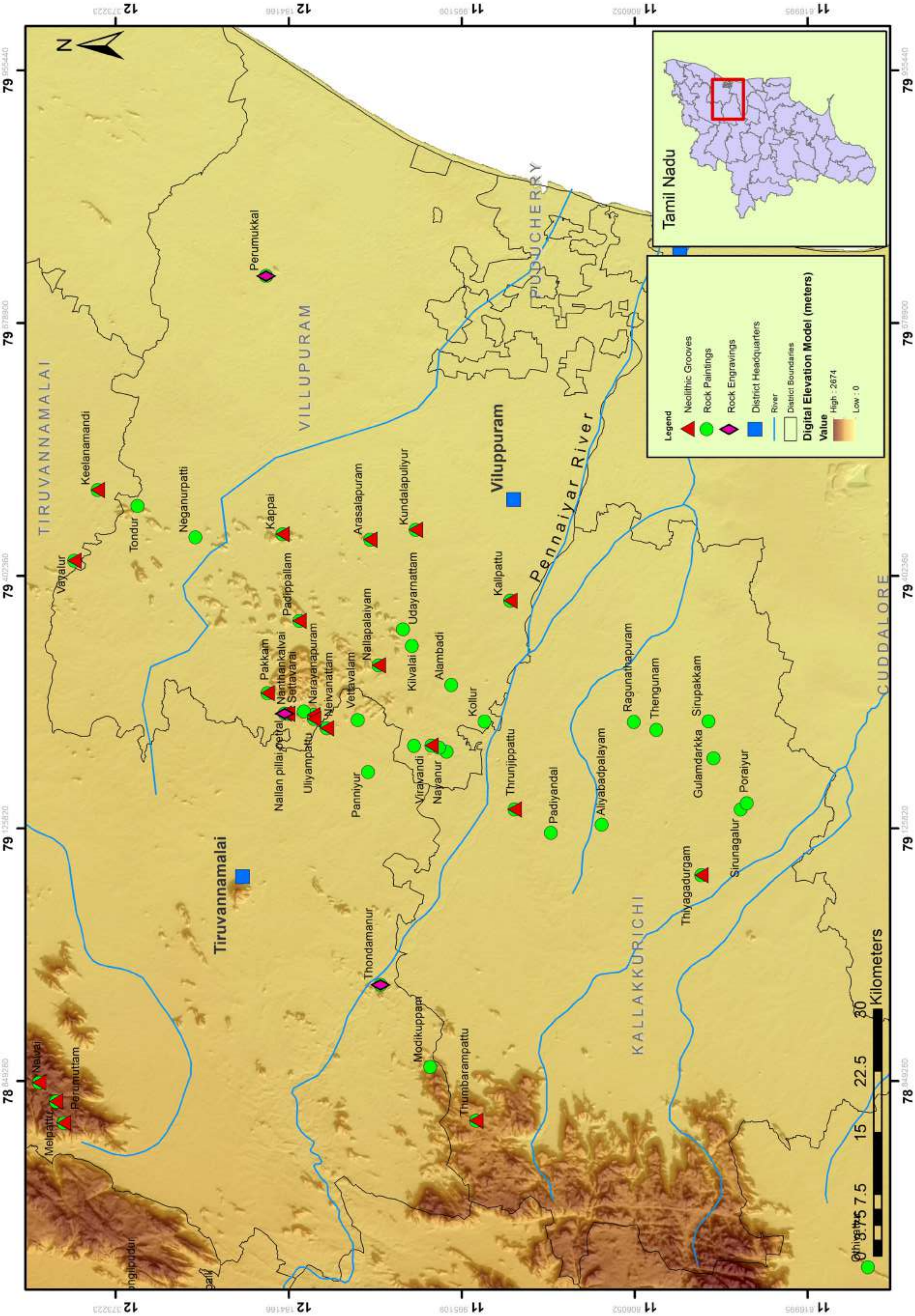
Neolithic Grooves
Rock Paintings
Rock Engravings
District Headquarters
River
District Boundaries
Digital Elevation Model (meters)
Value
High : 2674
Low : 0
Tamil Nadu
0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 Kilometers
N
VELLORE
RANIPETTAI
TIRUVANNAMALAI
TIRUPPATTUR
KRISHNAGIRI
Palar River
Vellore
Krishnagiri

▸ *Map 1.5 Rock art sites in Vellore region*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TIRUVANNAMALAI
VILLUPURAM
PUDUCHERRY
CUDDALORE
KALLAKKURICHI
Tiruvannamalai
Villuppuram
Pennaiyar River
Perumukkal
Keelanamandi
Neganurpatti
Tondur
Vayalur
Kappai
Arasalapuram
Kundalapuliyur
Padippallam
Udayamattam
Nallapalaiyam
Pakkam
Nanthankalvai
Settavarai
Narayanapuram
Neivanattam
Vettavalam
Kilvalai
Alambadi
Kallpattu
Kollur
Nallan pillai petral
Uliyampattu
Panniyur
Viravandi
Nayanur
Thrunjippattu
Padiyandal
Aliyabadpalayam
Ragunathapuram
Thengunam
Sirupakkam
Gulamdarkka
Poraiyur
Sirunagalur
Thiyagadurgam
Thondamanur
Modikuppam
Thumbarampattu
Nelvai
Perumuttam
Melpattu
Athiyur
Tamil Nadu
Legend
Neolithic Grooves
Rock Paintings
Rock Engravings
District Headquarters
River
District Boundaries
Digital Elevation Model (meters)
Value
High : 2674
Low : 0
0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 Kilometers
12
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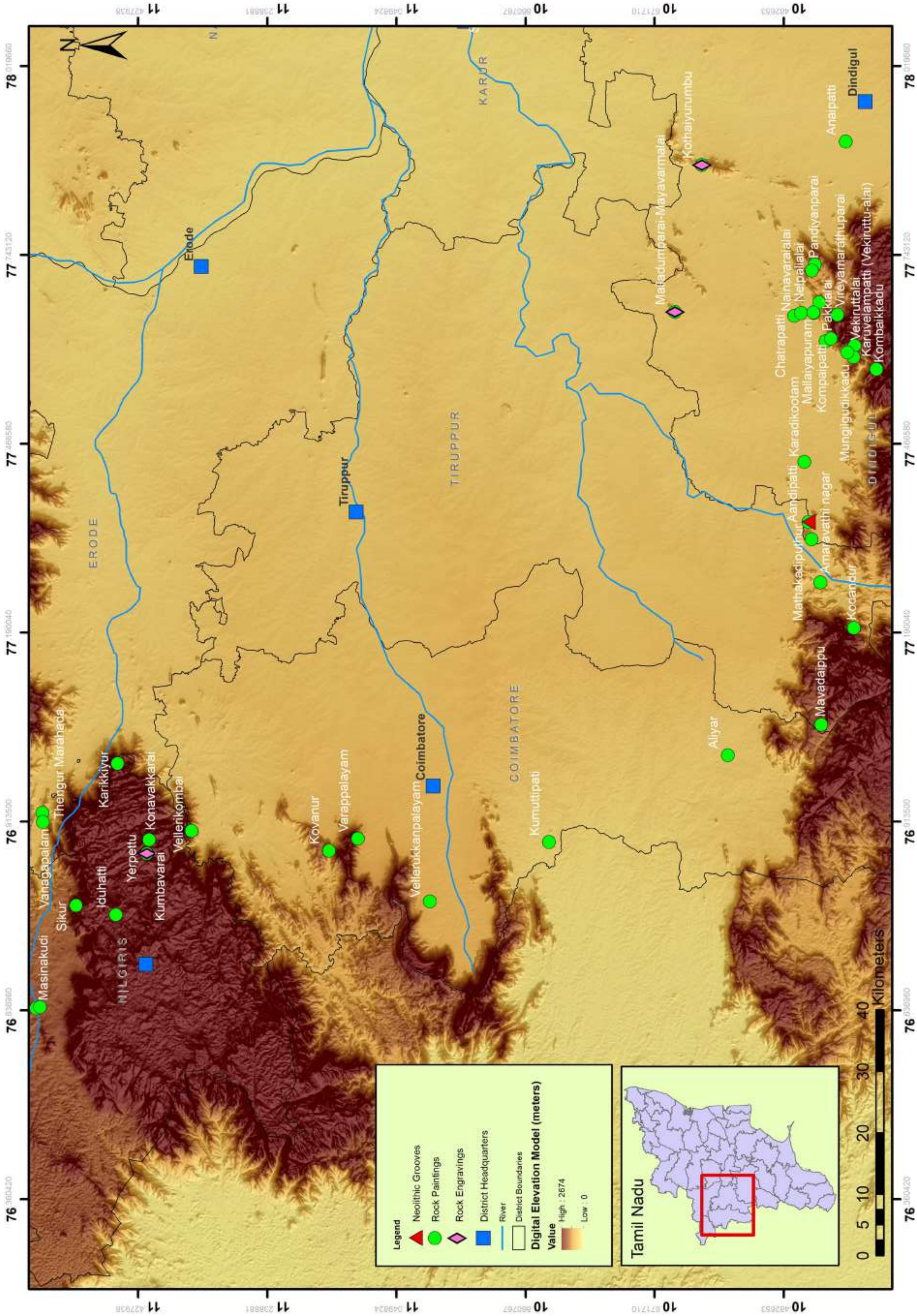
79
78

Map 1.6 Rock art sites in Villupuram and Tiruvannamalai region


N
ERODE
NILGIRIS
TIRUPPUR
COIMBATORE
KARUR
DINDIGUL
Erode
Tiruppur
Coimbatore
Dindigul
Masinakudi
Sikur
Vanagapalam
Thengur Marahada
Iduhatti
Karikkiyur
Yerpettu
Konavakkarai
Kumbavarai
Vellerikombai
Kovanur
Varappalayam
Vellerukkanpalayam
Kumuttipati
Aliyar
Mavadaippu
Kodandur
Mathakadipudur
Amaravathi nagar
Aandipatti
Karadikootam
Chatrapatti
Mallaiyapuram
Kompaipatti
Nainavaraialai
Netpaialai
Pandiyanparai
Pakkalai
Vireyamarathuparai
Mungilgudikkadu
Vekiruttalai
Karuvelampatti (Vekiruttu-alai)
Kombaikkadu
Maladumbarai-Mayavarmalai
Kothaiyurumbu
Anaipatti
Legend
Neolithic Grooves
Rock Paintings
Rock Engravings
District Headquarters
River
District Boundaries
Digital Elevation Model (meters)
Value
High : 2674
Low : 0
Tamil Nadu
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Kilometers
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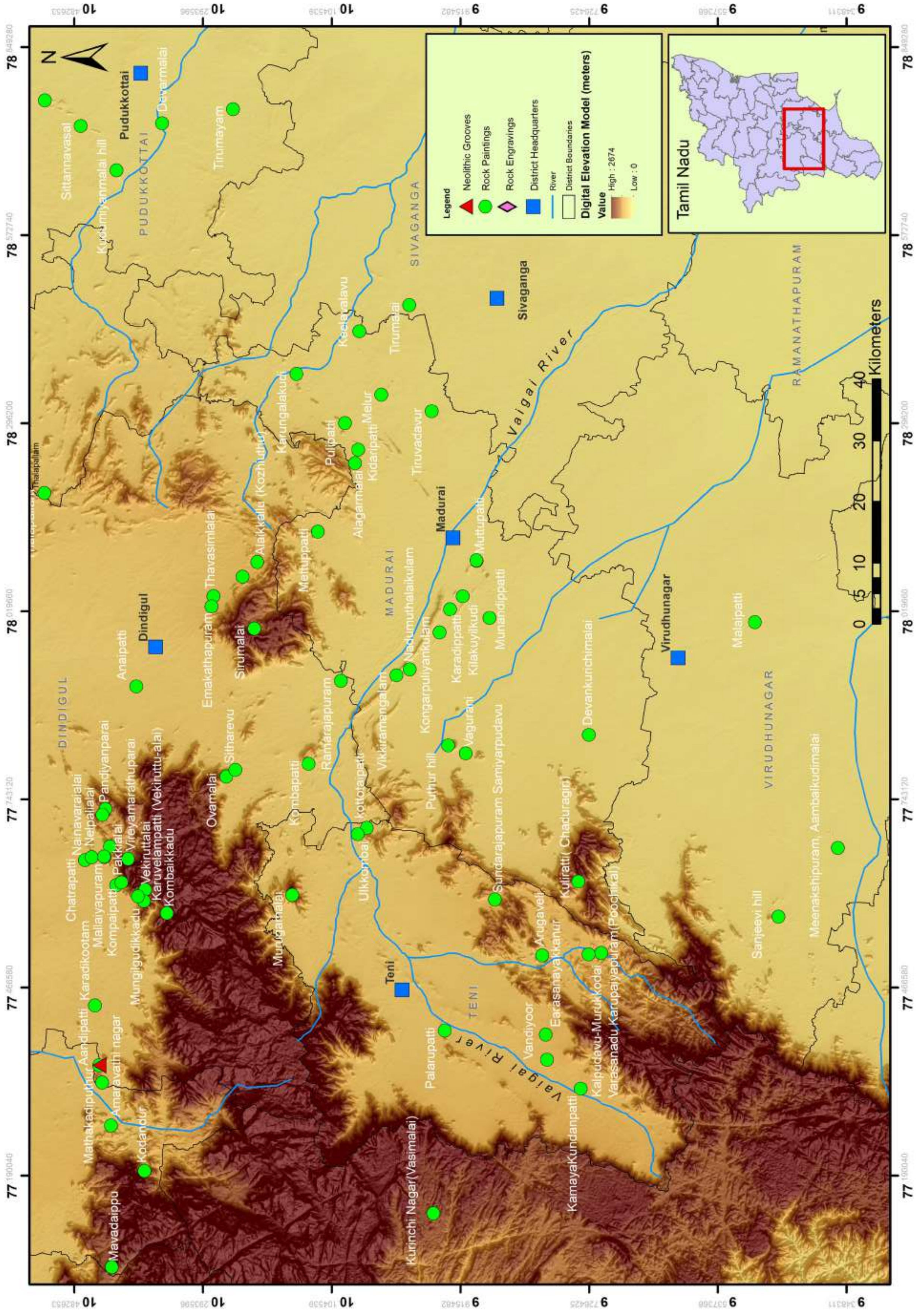
Map 1.7 Rock art sites in Kongu and Nilgiris regions of Tamil Nadu



Legend
Neolithic Grooves
Rock Paintings
Rock Engravings
District Headquarters
River
District Boundaries
Digital Elevation Model (meters)
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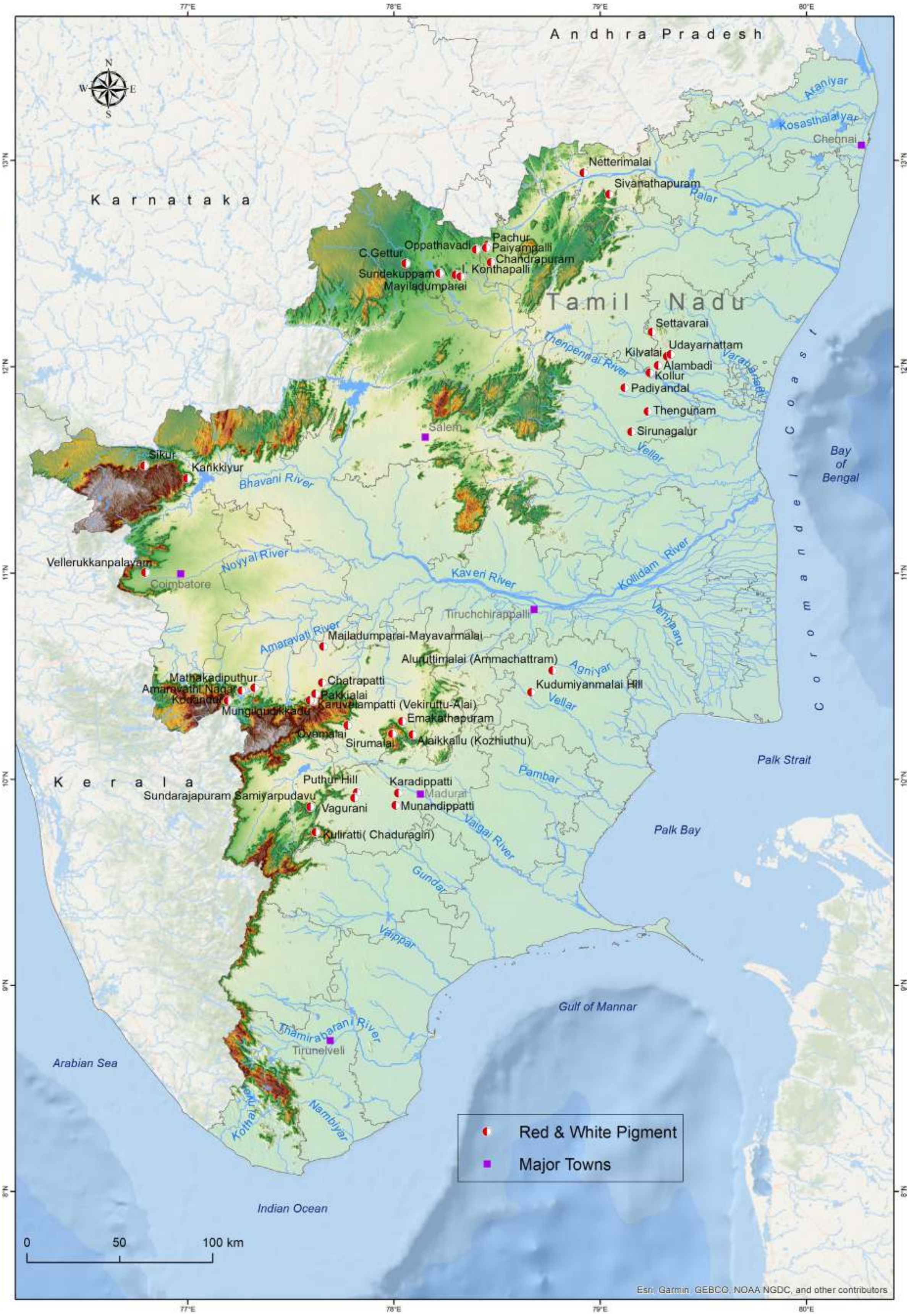
Tamil Nadu
Kilometers
0 5 10 20 30 40
N
PUDUKKOTTAI
SIVAGANGA
MADURAI
DINDIGUL
TENI
VIRUDHUNAGAR
RAMANATHAPURAM
Pudukkottai
Sivaganga
Madurai
Dindigul
Teni
Virudhunagar
Vaigai River
Sittannavasal
Kudumiyanmalai hill
Devarmalai
Tirumayam
Thalapallam
Keelavalavu
Tirumalai
Karungalakudi
Melur
Kidaripatti
Pulipatti
Alagarmalai
Tiruvadavur
Alaikkulu (Kozhuthur)
Thavasimalai
Emakathapuram
Mettuppatti
Sirumalai
Anaipatti
Muttupatti
Nadumuthalaikulam
Karadippatti
Kilakuyilkudi
Munandippatti
Kongarpuliyankulam
Vikkiramangalam
Ramarajapuram
Sitharevu
Ovamalai
Kombapatti
Kottaipatti
Ulkkombai
Murugamalai
Puthur hill
Vagurani
Sundarajapuram Samiyarpudavu
Devankurichimalai
Kulirati (Chaduragiri)
Arugaveli
Earasanayakkanur
Kalpudavu-Murukkodai
Varasanadu Karupaiyapuram (Poochikal)
Vandiyoor
Palarupatti
KamayaKundanpatti
Kurinchi Nagar (Vasimalai)
Malaipatti
Sanjeevi hill
Meenakshipuram, Aambakudimalai
Chatrapatti
Nainavaraialai
Nelpalaiai
Pandiyanparai
Mallaiyapuram
Pakkialai
Vireyamarathuparai
Kompaipatti
Vekiruttalai
Karuvelampatti (Vekiruttu-alai)
Kombaikkadu
Mungilgudikkadu
Aandipatti
Karadikootam
Mathakadipudur
Amaravathi nagar
Kodandur
Mavadaippu
77
78
10
9

Map 1.8 Rock art sites in Madurai region of Tamil Nadu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Chandrapuram
Sundekuppam
Konthapalli
Mayiladumparai
Settavarai
Thenpennai River
Udayarnattam
Kilvalai
Alambadi
Kollur
Varahanadi
Padiyandal
Thengunam
Sirunagalur
Salem
Vellar
Sikur
Karikkiyur
Bhavani River
Bay of Bengal
Coromandel Coast
Vellerukkanpalayam
Coimbatore
Noyyal River
Kaveri River
Kollidam River
Tiruchchirappalli
Vennaaru
Amaravati River
Mailadumparai-Mayavarmalai
Aluruttimalai (Ammachattram)
Agniyar
Kudumiyanmalai Hill
Vellar
Mathakadiputhur
Amaravathi Nagar
Kodandur
Chatrapatti
Pakkialai
Karuvelampatti (Vekiruttu-Alai)
Mungiluduikkadu
Emakathapuram
Ovamalai
Sirumalai
Alaikkallu (Kozhiuthu)
Palk Strait
Puthur Hill
Karadippatti
Pambar
Sundarajapuram
Samiyarpudavu
Madurai
Vagurani
Munandippatti
Kuliratti(Chaduragiri)
Vaigai River
Palk Bay
Gundar
Vaippar
Gulf of Mannar
Thamirabarani River
Tirunelveli
Arabian Sea
Kothai
Nambiyar
Red & White Pigment
Major Towns
Indian Ocean
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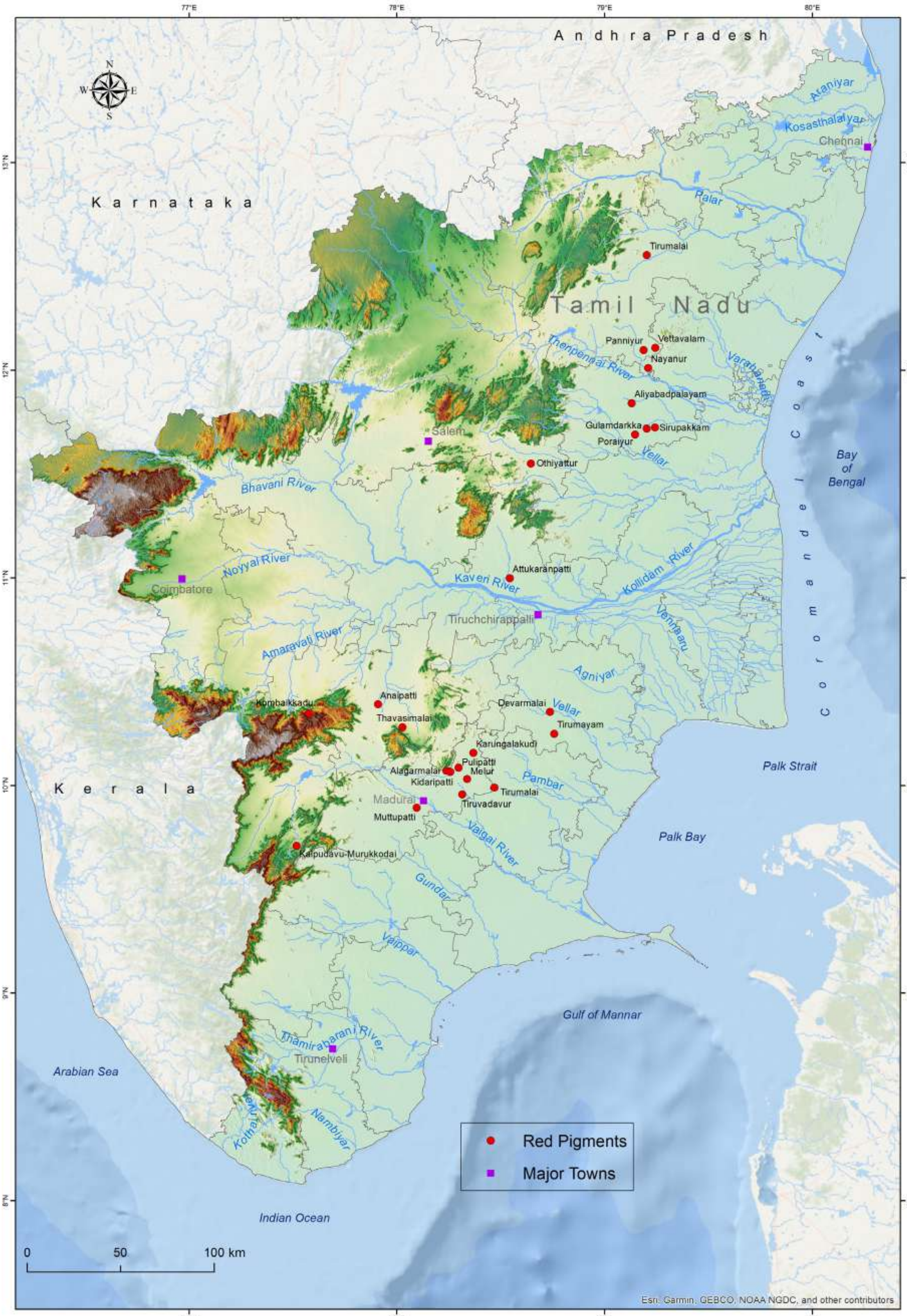
100 km
Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

Map 1.9 Rock paintings in red and white pigments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Tamil Nadu
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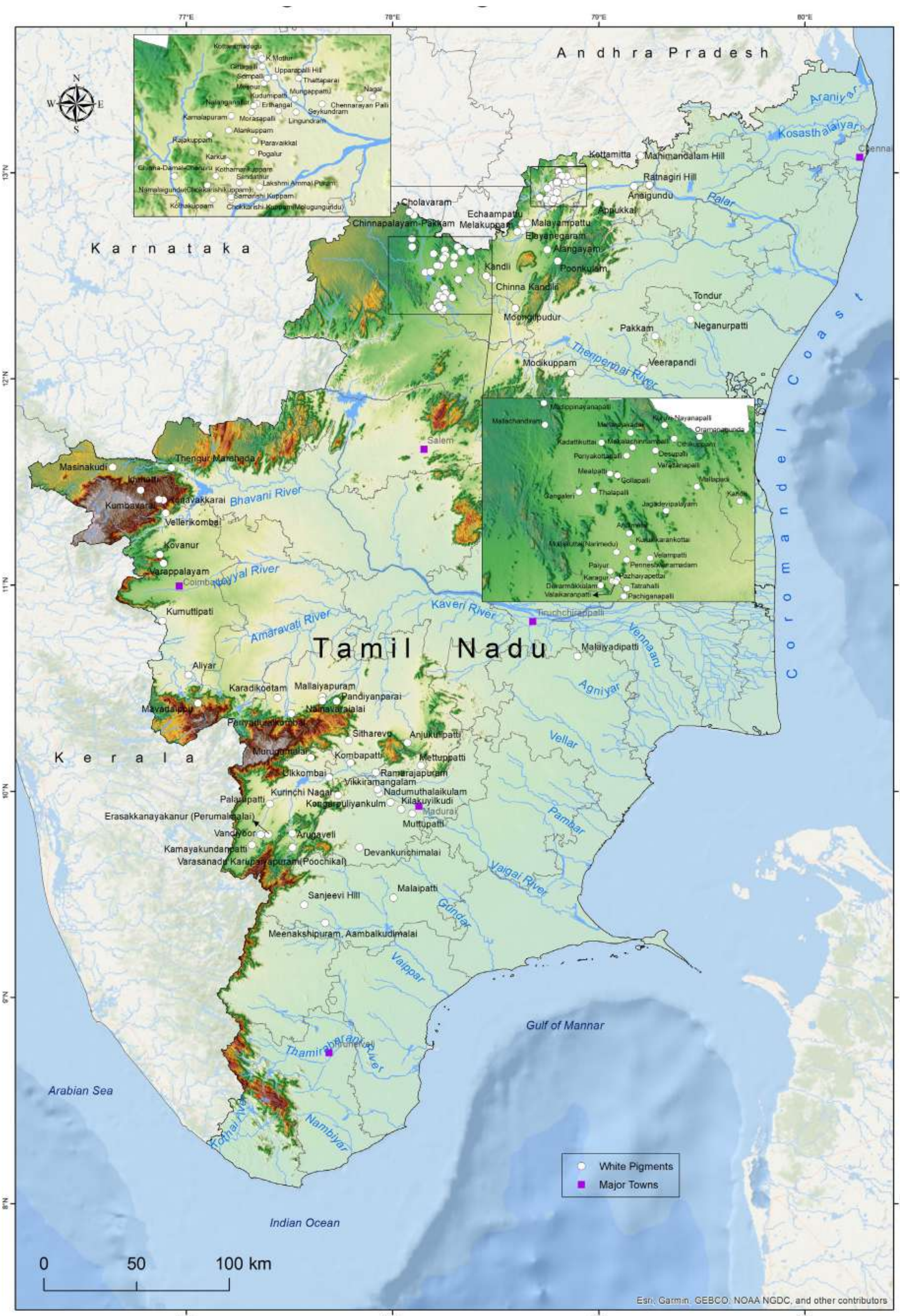
Kosasthalaiyar
Chennai
Palar
Tirumalai
Panniyur
Vettavalam
Nayanur
Thenpennai River
Varahanadi
Aliyabadpalayam
Gulamdarkka
Sirupakkam
Poraiyur
Vellar
Salem
Othiyattur
Bhavani River
Coromandel Coast
Bay of Bengal
Noyyal River
Coimbatore
Attukaranpatti
Kaveri River
Kollidam River
Tiruchchirappalli
Vennaaru
Amaravati River
Agniyar
Anaipatti
Kombaikkadu
Thavasimalai
Devarmalai
Vellar
Tirumayam
Karungalakudi
Pulipatti
Alagarmalai
Melur
Kidaripatti
Pambar
Tirumalai
Madurai
Tiruvadavur
Muttupatti
Vaigai River
Palk Strait
Palk Bay
Kalpudavu-Murukkodai
Gundar
Vaippar
Gulf of Mannar
Thamirabarani River
Tirunelveli
Arabian Sea
Kothaiyar
Nambiyar
Red Pigments
Major Towns
Indian Ocean
0
50
100 km
Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

Map 1.10 Rock paintings in exclusively red and white pigments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Kerala
Tamil Nadu
Coromandel Coast
Arabian Sea
Indian Ocean
Gulf of Mannar
Araniyar
Kosasthalaiyar
Chennai
Palar
Thenpennai River
Bhavani River
Noyyal River
Amaravati River
Kaveri River
Vennaaru
Agniyar
Vellar
Pambar
Vaigai River
Gundar
Vaippar
Thamirabarani River
Nambiyar
Kothaiyar
Kottamitta
Mahimandalam Hill
Ratnagiri Hill
Anaigundu
Appukkal
Cholavaram
Echaampattu
Chinnapalayam-Pakkam
Melakuppam
Malayampattu
Elayanegaram
Alangayam
Poonkulam
Kandli
Chinna Kandili
Moongilpudur
Tondur
Pakkam
Neganurpatti
Modikuppam
Veerapandi
Salem
Thengur Marahada
Masinakudi
Kumbavarai
Kottavakkarai
Vellerikombai
Kovanur
Varappalayam
Coimbatore
Kumuttipati
Tiruchchirappalli
Malaiyadipatti
Aliyar
Karadikoottam
Mallaiyapuram
Pandiyanparai
Nainavaraialai
Mavadaippu
Perumalkombai
Sitharevu
Anjukulipatti
Kombapatti
Mettuppatti
Murugamalai
Ukkombai
Ramarajapuram
Vikkiramangalam
Nadumuthalaikulam
Kurinchi Nagar
Kongarpuliyankulm
Kilakuyilkudi
Palanipatti
Madurai
Muttupatti
Erasakkanayakanur (Perumalmalai)
Vandiyoor
Arugaveli
Kamayakundanpatti
Varasanadu Karupaiyapuram (Poochikal)
Devankurichimalai
Sanjeevi Hill
Malaipatti
Meenakshipuram, Aambalkudimalai
Tirunelveli
White Pigments
Major Towns
0
50
100 km
Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

Map 1.11 Rock paintings in white pigment

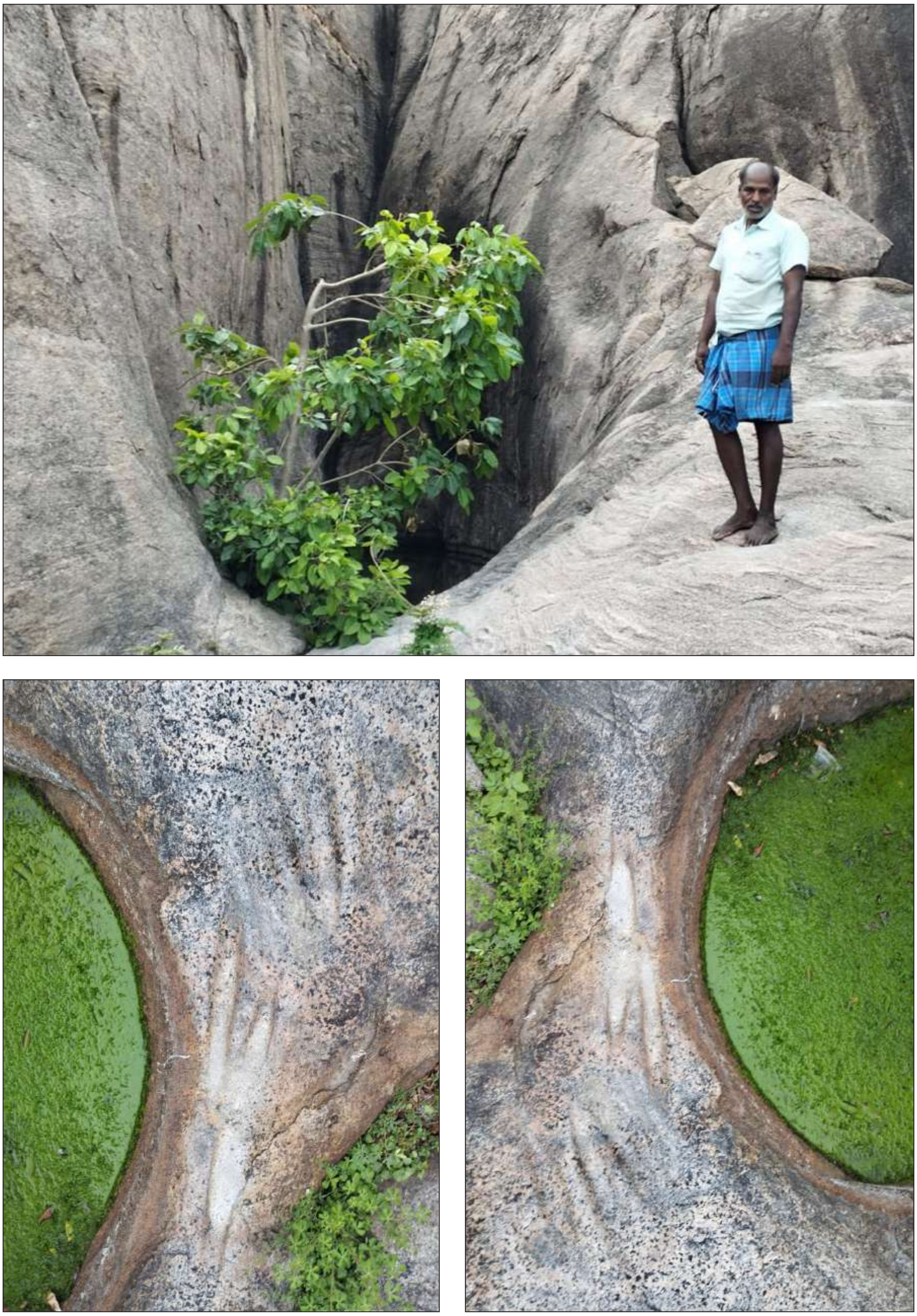


Fig. 1.1 Settavarai: Neolithic grooves

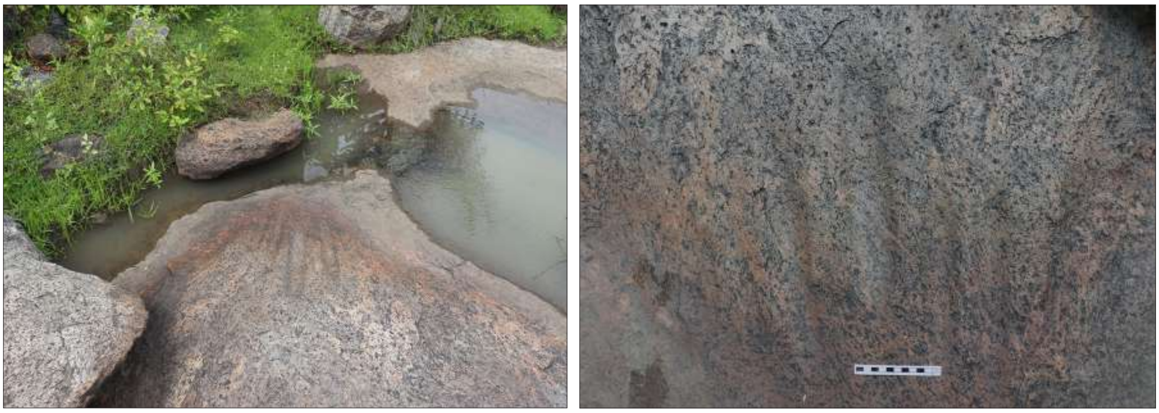


Fig. 1.2 Mayiladumparai: Neolithic grooves

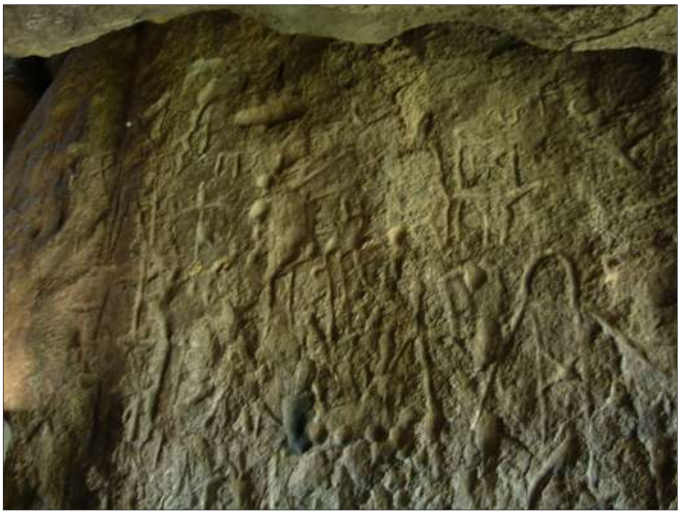


Fig. 1.3 Perumukkal: Rock engravings

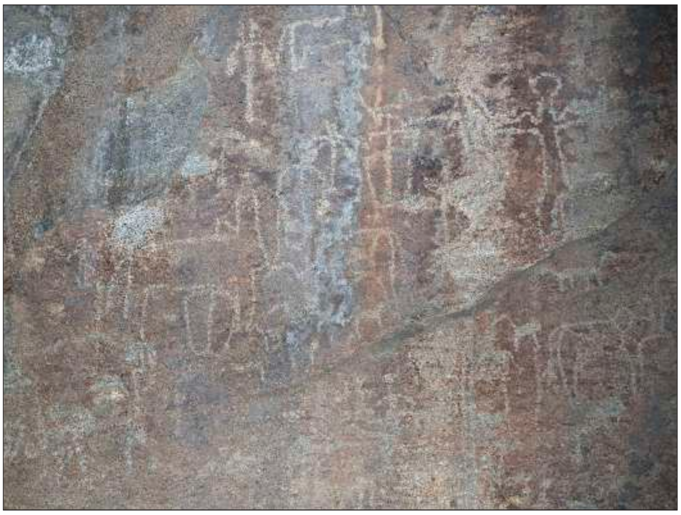
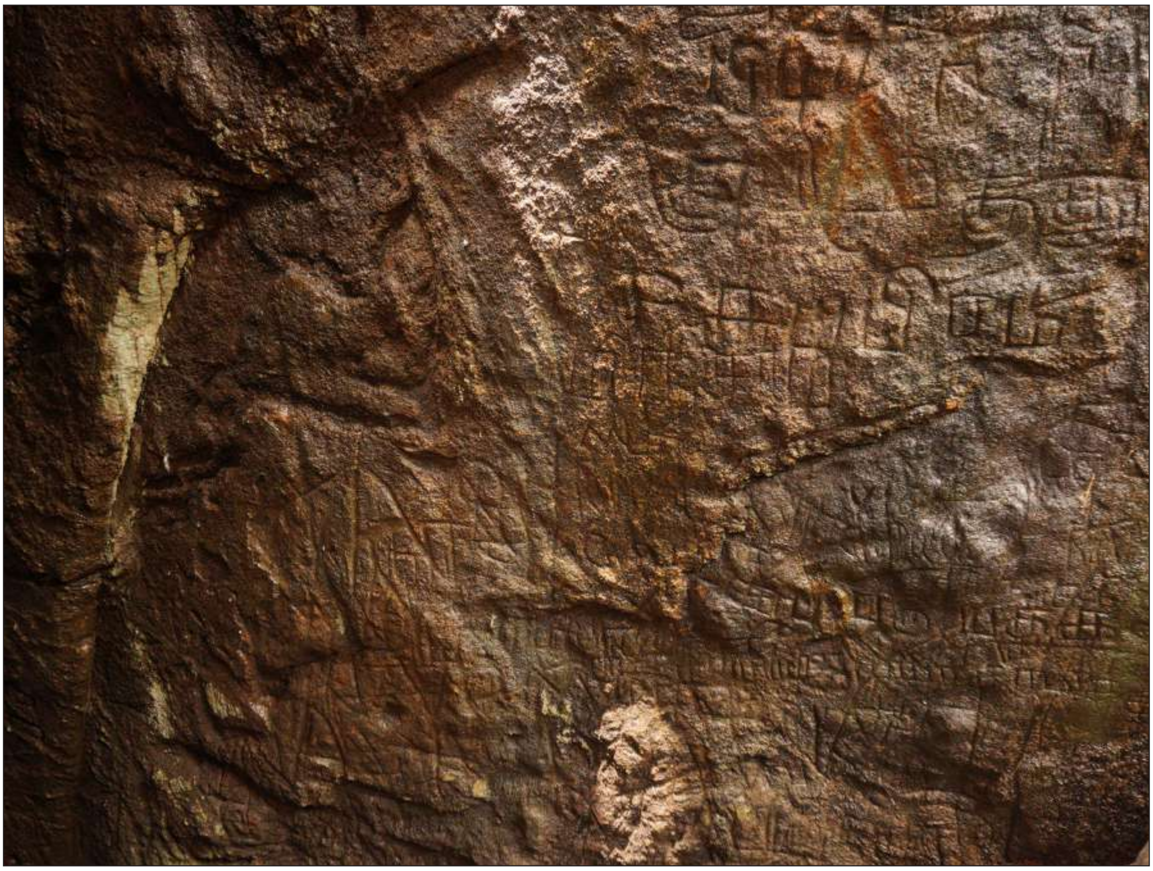


Fig. 1.4 Settavarai complex (Nallanpillaiperral): Rock engravings



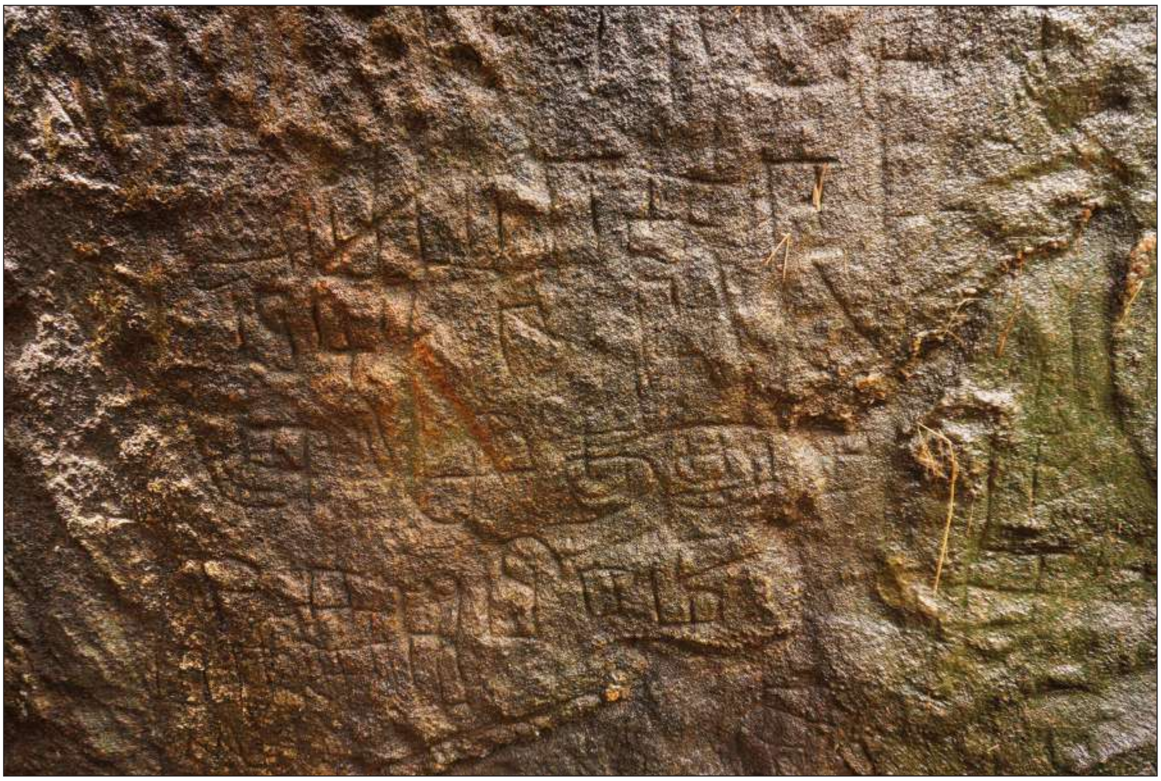


Fig. 1.5 Thondamanur: Rock engravings

Chronology and Distribution

To date, nearly 239 sites are known to have yielded both pictographs and petroglyphs executed on the rock-shelters and in the 'megalithic' tombs in Tamil Nadu (Appendix 1.1). Eleven sites have petroglyphs (Appendix 1.4). Rock art is witnessed throughout the region with a higher concentration in the northern part of Tamil Nadu and in Western Ghats of Nilgiris, Kongu and Madurai regions (Map 1.5). This situation is, probably, due to limited explorations carried out in the southern region. In the recent past, several Palaeolithic sites have been discovered in Chingleput, Vellore, Dharmapuri and Ariyalur districts. The discovery of a number of Palaeolithic and Microlithic tools in the Lower Kaveri valley at sites like at Kilkolattur (Fig. 1.6), Kattur and Peraiyur is noteworthy. Furthermore, numerous Microlithic sites have been discovered throughout Tamil Nadu (Fig.1.7). Rock art sites are found mainly in association with the Microlithic, the Neolithic and the Iron Age cultures and to some extent with the Early Historic. In the Microlithic and Neolithic contexts, they occur in open rock-shelters located within the vicinity of the settlements. In the Iron Age context, they are found both in rock shelters as well as on orthostats of graves, particularly dolmens.

Some of the paintings, though associated with the later phase of the Iron Age, do reflect historical elements. The availability of 1537 Tamili (Tamil-Brahmi) inscribed potsherds from 47 sites dated with 73 AMS C14 dates, places the introduction of script around 7th century BCE. Thus, the period around the 8th-6th century BCE could be considered as an overlapping phase. Some rock paintings are noticed in the caves associated with the Jain beds engraved with the Early Historic Tamili (Tamil-Brahmi) inscriptions. Whether these paintings are contemporary with or prior to the Jain occupations is yet to be assessed. In all probability, Tamil Nadu has a long tradition of rock art starting from the Microlithic period and extending up to the historical phase. Majority of the rock shelters were continuously occupied resulting in overlapping of evidence and in a few cases the defacement of earlier rock art. Analysis of superimposition, spatial and stylistic elements of the rock art and the associated archaeological materials in a stratified context have helped to some extent in dating the rock art. For instance, the excavations conducted in an open rock shelter associated with rock paintings at Mayiladumparai provide a fine example (Rajan 2004: 74-89). Recent AMS date of 2172 BCE obtained for a sample collected from an Iron Age context at Myiladumparai suggests that Neolithic material and associated rock art, neolithic grooves and the petroglyph dates back to earlier than 2nd millennium BCE. Recent AMS C14 dates obtained for cultural material from Iron Age context at Kilnamandi, Myiladumparai, Mangadu, Thelunganur, Adichanallur and Sivagalai fall between 3000 BCE-2500 BCE. These dates securely place the date of early iron in Tamil Nadu to 3rd millennium BCE. Therefore, rock paintings associated with Neolithic phase could be dated back to the 3rd millennium BCE and the Iron Age paintings could be placed between 3000 BCE and 700 BCE and Early Historic rock paintings after 700 BCE as on today. These dates are subject to change upon the arrival of new dates.

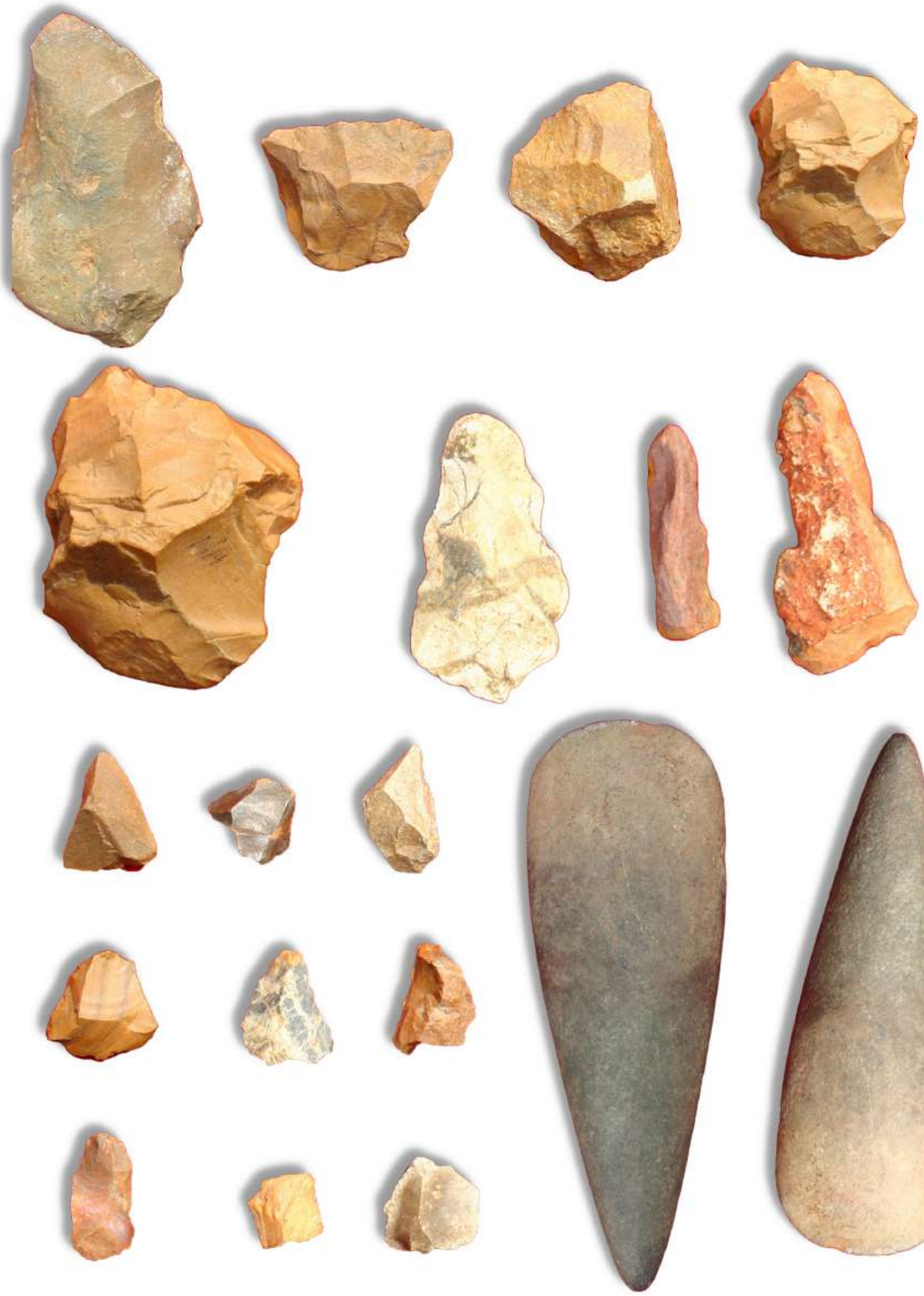


Fig. 1.6 Kilkolattur (Ariyalur region): Prehistoric tools

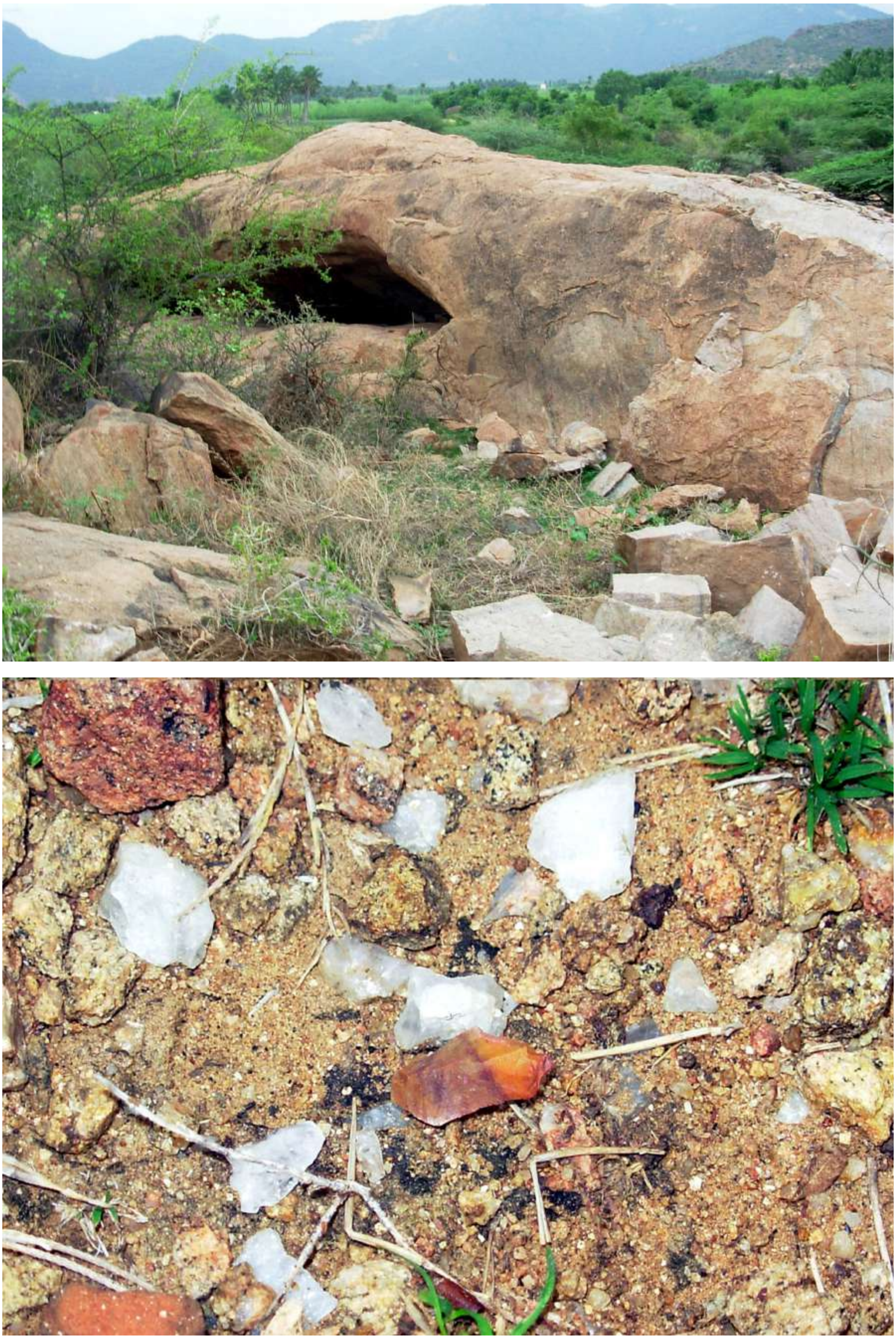


Fig. 1.7 Ulkombai (Madurai region): Rock shelter with paintings and microlithic tools

Assigning a date to rock-shelters without any cultural material other than paintings is a herculean and complex task. In general, the rock-shelters have been dated based on comparative studies. However, this method cannot be applied universally to all shelters as the content, theme, philosophy and the pigment of the paintings vary through time. Microlithic tools, Neolithic celts and Iron Age habitation material have been recovered from a large number of rock shelters and in their vicinity. Mayiladumparai, Munandipatti, Ulkombai, Kilvalai, Perumukkal, Mallapadi and Paiyampalli are some of the best examples.

With regard to petroglyphs, Tamil Nadu presents very limited evidence, but with the Perumukkal, Nallanpillaiperral and Thondamanur engravings/brushings standing as prime examples of this category. Sporadic engravings can be found in the rock shelters at Mayiladumparai, Tirumalpadi, Chinna Kandili, Chennarayanpalli, Mahimandalam, Athithangal and Rathinagiri. Excavations carried out at Mayiladumparai where engravings are exposed in the shelter, suggest that these engravings belong to the Neolithic phase. The engravings/brushings and grinding grooves noticed at Nallanpillaiperral near Settavarai prove another example and rock-paintings (Settavarai) in the vicinity suggesting their Neolithic association. The Perumukkal engravings are identical in all respect to those found at the Edakkal caves in Kerala. In addition to the usual engravings on the shelter walls, cup-marks have been noticed on the capstone of the Iron Age (megalithic) cist burials at Karubayanahalli and Vedarthattakkal in Krishnagiri district. Cup marks were also witnessed for the first time on the boulders of a stone circle entombing a cist burial at Velliripatti near Melur in Madurai district and at Surai, Chandrapuram and Odugattur in Vellore region. Recently Mulli Mani of Archaeological Survey of India excavated a rock shelter at Malayadipatti near Pudukkottai and he associated these marks with Palaeolithic times although such tools have not been observed in the region. None of the Palaeolithic site so far yielded any remnants of rock art in Tamil Nadu other than Malayadipatti.

In Tamil Nadu, traces of rock art are found in the districts of Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Vellore, Tiruvannamalai, Coimbatore and Madurai with greater concentration in the first three districts. Any new addition to the list in future may change the present concentration in northern Tamil Nadu. The northern part, particularly the Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri and Vellore districts, has paintings of the Mesolithic and the Neolithic phases. The findings at Mayiladumparai, Paiyampalli and Mallapadi are the best examples for this category. These sites are located in the landscape, which is an extension of the Mysore plateau. Neolithic tool production centres were observed at Varatanapalli and Kappalavadi in Krishnagiri district. This tradition continued in the Neolithic phase and much of the evidence surfaced in the Iron Age as seen at Kilvalai in Tiruvannamalai district. The late phase of Iron Age culture in Tamil Nadu overlaps with the Early Historic phase. The southern part of Tamil Nadu, particularly the area south of the river Vaigai has not yielded evidence of the Neolithic phase. Although, a considerable number of Neolithic celts have been recovered from surface explorations, we hardly have anything to say conclusively about the Neolithic phase. Excavations conducted at Mangudi (Shetty 2003) and Teriruveli reveal that this region transitioned directly from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age directly which contrasts sharply with the scenario in northern parts of Tamil Nadu. Based on the current evidence, the rock paintings found at sites like at Sirumalai, Mayiladumparai, Ulkombai, Munandipatti and other places could be associated with the Mesolithic phase.

In the case of the Iron Age, the picture is somewhat clear. The area under study was inhabited by communities belonging to different social and occupational groups. The earliest groups were primarily involved in hunting and cattle rearing, while later groups engaged in agriculture. The former groups settled down on hillocks, whereas the latter occupied riverine tracts suitable for agriculture. Both groups practiced raising Iron Age (megalithic) tombs for their dead, but there seem to be architectural and cultural variations in their funerary rites. Groups inhabiting the hillocks or foothill regions generally built dolmens and dolmenoid cists relying on small tanks and perennial ponds for water. Inhabitants settled on the plains adopted urn burials and stone circles entombing cists or urn burials (Rajan 1992: 35-47). The size, type and location of the burials, as well as the associated habitations indicate that in Tamil Nadu, rock art was adopted by the people who were actively involved in cattle raising or having a rudimentary form of agro-pastoral economy rather than those associated with agriculture. Most of the paintings were noticed on rock-shelters and dolmens. Rock-shelters are generally located in the middle part of the hillocks, in the vicinity of habitation mounds and Iron Age graves thereby indicating their close relationship. Most of the habitation mounds are found on the flat surface of the hillock, whereas the rock-shelters are situated slightly away from the habitation mound. The absence of any cultural material in these shelters clearly suggests that they did not witness long-term human occupation, instead they were used occasionally at specific times. It probably suggests its ritualistic role. Some of the shelters are still worshiped by the local communities. For instance, at Mallachandram in Dharmapuri district and at Kilseppuli in Tiruvannamalai district even today during the festival time, particularly in the Tamil calendar month of karthikai (November-December), the inhabitants of the village first lit a lamp in the dolmen/rock shelter before beginning the celebration at home. This living tradition explicitly indicates the continuity and the importance of the rock shelters. It seems that in ancient times too, the Neolithic or Iron Age people would have visited these shelters on specific occasions to perform similar type of rituals. The ethno-archaeological observation shows the spiritual importance attached to the shelters. A close observation of various rock art sites suggests such an association. Chronologically, the earlier rock art sites were found in the northeastern part of Tamil Nadu, specifically in Krishnagiri taluk of Dharmapuri district. It seems that the idea slowly penetrated into Tiruvannamalai district through the Chengam pass. The tradition of painting the Iron Age tombs was discarded and only on the rock-shelters this practice was continued. For instance, nearly 90 % of the rock art sites were found in association with dolmens in Dharmapuri district. Out of 18 dolmen sites, nearly 14 sites were reported with paintings (Rajan 1991: 37-52). Hence, it is clear that this art was well received and absorbed into the historical period too, as witnessed in the rock shelters.

Pigments

Rock paintings were invariably made using both white and red pigments (Map 1.9). At Mayiladumparai and Ormanagunta paintings in red pigment are superimposed by white pigment suggesting an earlier date for the red pigment. This indicates that paintings were drawn on the shelters at an early date and, then on the graves. It is probable that the paintings with red pigment belonged to the Neolithic period (Map 1.10). However, this needs to be probed further. The absence of red pigment in the Iron Age tombs and their superimposition by white pigment suggests their earlier date (Map 1.11). The type, position and techniques indicate that they were executed in different locations within the same shelter. Besides red and white, yellow and black pigments were rarely used.

Motifs and Their Locational Context

There is a negligible difference between the motifs found on the dolmens and on the rock-shelters. The former had numerous human figurines involved in fighting, whereas the latter had scenes depicting social gatherings. The figures are done either in flat wash or in outline. While executing the paintings on the interior surface of the dolmens, the painters always preferred the western orthostat first, followed by the northern, southern and finally, the eastern orthostats. Generally, the paintings were seen on the western orthostats against the portholes. The paintings in the rock-shelter were generally found on the ceiling, but a little interior from the edge. Interestingly at Mayiladumparai, the rock-shelter was devoid of any natural light, and the paintings were found in the darker part of the shelter.

Themes

Cattle Raids

The paintings at several sites depict the scenes of warriors heading for cattle raids. In these cases, the warriors were seen mounted on the cattle and holding weapons such as swords, javelins, lance like objects and shields. In a few cases, the victorious hero is shown with a headdress or square box and mounted on cattle. The square box may also indicate the memorial stone raised for the slain hero involved in cattle retrieval. These themes recall the later day hero stones found in Tamil Nadu. At Konavakkarai, the hero is shown in a large size, whereas the rest were depicted comparatively smaller size (Paundurai 1986: 34-36). This scheme of depiction is well illustrated in the later day hero stones as well.

Hunting Scenes

Hunting scenes are depicted in various patterns. For an instance, an archer holds a bow and arrow above the head in a position of charging the arrow upwards. In another scene, four hunters encircle a deer trapped in the middle. The horns of the deer are depicted with branches, which indicates the attention for detail by the painter. In another instance, a hunter kills an animal by piercing a lance-like object. It is to be recalled here that memorial stones were also raised for the heroes who were killed while hunting or fighting wild animals (Rajan 1992b). There are a number of such memorial stones called pantrikuttipattankal, pulikuttipattankal and yanaikutti-pattankal, respectively, indicating the stones erected for the men who were killed by a boar, a tiger and an elephant (Nagasamy 1975: 45-49).

Other Scenes

Fighting scenes, tilling of land, dancing in a row, riding a horse and cattle rearing are some of the other scenes portrayed in rock art. In one instance, a fighting scene involving a horse rider (?) is depicted. The contenders fight with a shield in one hand and hold the reins of the horse in the other hand. Sometimes, they wield a lance-like object. In depicting the dancing scenes, the painters always preferred to draw human figures in a row. In one case, a house is drawn in front of a row of four human figures depicted in dancing posture. In another painting, a plant is depicted emerging from a square box reminiscent of the 'tree and railing' symbol of the punch marked coins or Buddhist tradition.

Interestingly, the paintings observed at Kuruvinayanapalli included a symbol with 12 square boxes formed by 5 vertical and 4 horizontal strokes. Of the five vertical strokes, the inner three end with arrow marks. Four human figures were also depicted, two each on either side of the aforementioned symbol. Additionally, two human figures and one animal were also seen. The boxed-symbol with arrow mark in the centre is similar to the symbols depicted in the fertility stone, locally called sanniyasikal of later times. The animal depicted on one side of the motif may symbolically represent an animal that was made to cross the feature represented in the motif, probably in order to increase fertility. Other symbols like stars, human genitals, flower motifs and circles with a dot were also found.

Symbols

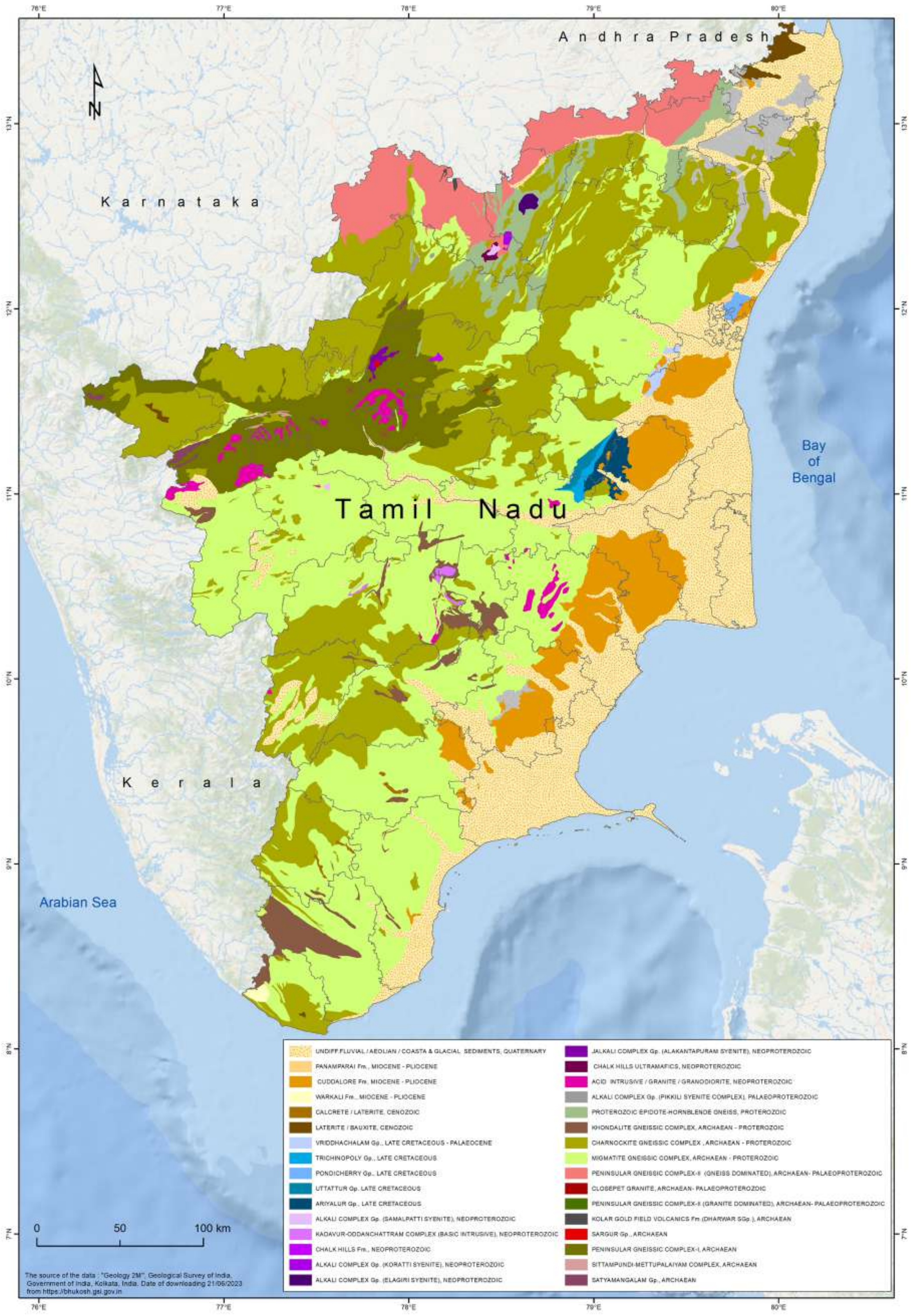
Another important aspect of the study is the graffiti found in association with various themes. At Kilvalai five symbols were found (Samy 1984: 71-72) and such graffiti were also found at Vettavalam, Tirumalai, Kurralapadai and Podikaimalai. The Panaikkarans, a contemporary 'tribal' population, worship the symbols found at Podikaimalai. Recently, engravings were found in the rock-shelter at Perumukkal and at Tirumalpadi. These engravings are identical to the paintings found elsewhere. It is probable that in the course of time instead of painting, people began to engrave them for posterity.

Sum-up

Thus, situating the rock paintings in proper socio-cultural contexts, studying their evolution or transformation within a specific chronological frame, systematic documentation and proper protection are still needed as far as the concern of rock art sites of Tamil Nadu. The varied nature of the paintings and their association with contemporary cultural materials gives us enormous data to understand the past societies from a right perspective. The unprotected nature of the rock shelters and Iron Age dolmens have made them vulnerable to vandalism. As long as the rock art sites are not discovered, the sites remain in a good state of preservation. However, the discovery of a site and its subsequent publication invites a tremendous amount of human pressure in the name of documentation, filming, curiosity and ritual initiations. These intrusions lead to the loss of precious tangible cultural properties. Urgent steps are needed from the government to protect these valuable archaeological remains. Thus, the present work is a meaningful and resourceful initiative in the preservation, conservation and documentation of the visual presentation of our ancestors.

Chapter-2

ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND


76°E
77°E
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13°N
12°N
11°N
10°N
9°N
8°N
7°N
N
Andhra Pradesh
Karnataka
Tamil Nadu
Kerala
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
0
50
100 km
UNDIFF.FLUVIAL / AEOLIAN / COASTA & GLACIAL SEDIMENTS, QUATERNARY
PANAMPARAI Fm., MIOCENE - PLIOCENE
CUDDALORE Fm. MIOCENE - PLIOCENE
WARKALI Fm., MIOCENE - PLIOCENE
CALCRETE / LATERITE, CENOZOIC
LATERITE / BAUXITE, CENOZOIC
VRIDDHACHALAM Gp., LATE CRETACEOUS - PALAEOCENE
TRICHINOPOLY Gp., LATE CRETACEOUS
PONDICHERRY Gp., LATE CRETACEOUS
UTTATTUR Gp. LATE CRETACEOUS
ARIYALUR Gp., LATE CRETACEOUS
ALKALI COMPLEX Gp. (SAMALPATTI SYENITE), NEOPROTEROZOIC
KADAVUR-ODDANCHATTRAM COMPLEX (BASIC INTRUSIVE), NEOPROTEROZOIC
CHALK HILLS Fm., NEOPROTEROZOIC
ALKALI COMPLEX Gp. (KORATTI SYENITE), NEOPROTEROZOIC
ALKALI COMPLEX Gp. (ELAGIRI SYENITE), NEOPROTEROZOIC
JALKALI COMPLEX Gp. (ALAKANTAPURAM SYENITE), NEOPROTEROZOIC
CHALK HILLS ULTRAMAFICS, NEOPROTEROZOIC
ACID INTRUSIVE / GRANITE / GRANODIORITE, NEOPROTEROZOIC
ALKALI COMPLEX Gp. (PIKKILI SYENITE COMPLEX), PALAEOPROTEROZOIC
PROTEROZOIC EPIDOTE-HORNBLENDE GNEISS, PROTEROZOIC
KHONDALITE GNEISSIC COMPLEX, ARCHAEAN - PROTEROZOIC
CHARNOCKITE GNEISSIC COMPLEX , ARCHAEAN - PROTEROZOIC
MIGMATITE GNEISSIC COMPLEX, ARCHAEAN - PROTEROZOIC
PENINSULAR GNEISSIC COMPLEX-II (GNEISS DOMINATED), ARCHAEAN- PALAEOPROTEROZOIC
CLOSEPET GRANITE, ARCHAEAN- PALAEOPROTEROZOIC
PENINSULAR GNEISSIC COMPLEX-II (GRANITE DOMINATED), ARCHAEAN- PALAEOPROTEROZOIC
KOLAR GOLD FIELD VOLCANICS Fm (DHARWAR SGp.), ARCHAEAN
SARGUR Gp., ARCHAEAN
PENINSULAR GNEISSIC COMPLEX-I, ARCHAEAN
SITTAMPUNDI-METTUPALAIYAM COMPLEX, ARCHAEAN
SATYAMANGALAM Gp., ARCHAEAN

The source of the data : "Geology 2M", Geological Survey of India, Government of India, Kolkata, India. Date of downloading 21/06/2023 from https://bhukosh.gsi.gov.in

Map 2.1 Geology of Tamil Nadu

Chapter-2

ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

The geology, geomorphology, minerals, metal resources and bio-diversity have played a critical role in the patterns of distribution of rock art sites. The formation of rock shelters served as a primary locale for expression and execution of art. The concentration and distribution of rock art sites can be seen against this background.

Geological History

Tamil Nadu's geology is a multifaceted tapestry of rock formations spanning billions of years. A composition consists of hard rocks of the Archaean eon, the younger sedimentary rocks of the Proterozoic era, the scattered rocks of the Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras, and the fossil-rich formations of the Cretaceous period, and the more recent Quaternary formation of the Cenozoic (Tertiary and Quaternary) era.

The geological history of Tamil Nadu is intertwined with the broader geological evolution of the Indian subcontinent. The Earth's crust has preserved the geological history covering the last 4.5 billion years. Between 4 to 2.5 billion years ago during the Archaean eon, the earth's crust formed and stabilized the emergence of the first continental nuclei. The Dharwar Craton, which includes parts of Tamil Nadu, was one of these ancient nuclei. The region was a part of a vast landmass that gradually merged with the supercontinent 'Ur', a hypothetical supercontinent that formed during the Archean eon, around 3.1 billion years ago (Ga). The regions oldest rocks such as charnockites and associated gneiss rocks formed.

Between 2.5 billion to 541 million years ago (mya) during the Proterozoic eon (Precambrian), the Proterozoic sedimentary basins like Cuddapah came into existence, indicating that the region was part of a shallow marine environment. Later, the breakup of Columbia led to the formation of new ocean basins and continental fragments. During the Proterozoic, between 1.3 billion and 750 mya, the supercontinent Rodinia prevailed. The sedimentary and tectonic features suggest that the study area was part of Rodinia's periphery that was experiencing significant rifting and sedimentation.

Now, between 541 to 245 mya (Palaeozoic era), the supercontinent Pangea existed, it represented a unified Earth's crust. The formation of Pangea brought together previously dispersed continents, leading to major orogenic (mountain-building) events. During the late Palaeozoic and early Mesozoic eras, the initial rifting of Pangea led to the separation and formation of two great landmasses namely the northern Laurasia and the southern Gondwana. Our study area along with the rest of the Indian subcontinent, was part of the Gondwana.

During the early Mesozoic era (252 to 66 million years ago), the breakup of Gondwana led to the drifting of the Indian plate away from the Antarctic and Australian plates. The Indian plate's northward drift was one of the fastest plate movements. It eventually led to its collision with the Eurasian plate and the uplift of the Himalayas. Further, it led to the formation of a new oceanic crust and led to the development of rift basins like the Kaveri Basin by accumulating thick sequences of marine and terrestrial sediments including sandstones, shales and limestones.

During the Cenozoic era (66 mya to the present), the Indian plate is under subduction below the Eurasian plate, leading to significant tectonic disturbances, although our study area has remained relatively stable. The Quaternary period is characterized by cyclic glacial and interglacial climatic conditions, impacting global sea levels and shaping of modern landscapes including the modern river systems and coastal plains of Tamil Nadu.

Geology of Tamil Nadu

The basement complex of Tamil Nadu is largely a part of the Southern Granulite Terrain covering 80% area of Tamil Nadu with groups of crystalline rocks of Archean to Proterozoic Age. The remaining area is covered with the Phanerozoic sedimentary rocks, which are found in the coastal and inland river basins. Recent studies have brought to light several shear zones and lineaments within the granulite-gneiss terrain of Tamil Nadu which otherwise was considered as a single litho-tectonic block. The region is broadly divisible into Northern and Southern Blocks, separated by the E-W extending Palghat-Kaveri Shear Zone. The Northern Block is considered as the southern extension of the Dharwar Craton and the Southern Block is known as the Pandyan Mobile Belt. The Palghat-Kaveri Shear Zone is bordered by the Moyar-Bhavani-Attur lineament to its north and the Phalghat-Kaveri Lineament to its south.

The Northern block primarily consists of charnockite/enderbite-pyroxene granulite-banded magnetite quartzite assemblages, with a small number of metasedimentary rocks and their migmatized equivalents. In the northernmost part of this block, amphibolite facies gneisses (Peninsular Gneisses) with associated supracrustals are to be found. This block is intersected by the Dharmapuri Shear Zone, which is characterized by the presence of several Neoproterozoic alkaline-carbonatite complexes. The Southern block, in contrast, is mainly composed of charnockites and gneisses interspersed with extensive sequences of quartzite-pelite-carbonate. Charnockite appears both as linear interbands with metasedimentary rocks and as large massifs, particularly visible in the Kodaikanal-Palani hill ranges and the Nagercoil area. In other hand, the Phalghat-Kaveri Shear Zone also known as Kaveri Suture Zone represent a varied litho assemblages of amphibolites facies gneisses (Bhavani Gneissic Complex) with islands of charnockites/enderbites. And its associated lowlands consist of a sequence of Sathyamangalam type supracrustal. Charnockites/Enderbites of thin bands and spots of mafic granulites and meta sedimentaries in few instances can occur in large massifs as seen in Nilgiri and Kollimalai-Pachamalai hills on west and east respectively.

The Northern and Southern Blocks are divided into minor litho-assemblages/ blocks. The Northern block is divided into: (i) Gudiyattam-Arakkonam Block, (ii) Yercaud-Madras Block and (iii) Dimbam-Tattakarai-Krishnagiri Block, every block is bounded/ separated by major shear zones or lineaments namely the E-W Palar lineament, Gudiyattam-Bhavani Straight belt, Javadi Hills west lineament, Mettur-Palakkodu lineament and the bordering Moyar-Bhavani-Attur Lineament. The Southern Block is further sub-divided into Tiruchirrapalli-Madurai-Palayamkottai Block in the north and Kanyakumari-Tenkasi straight belt in south with Achankovil lineament between them. And these blocks are further divided into several sectors, areas and complexes namely:

a. Gudiyattam- Arakkonam Block
b. Madras-Salem Block

- i. St. Thomas Mount-Pallavaram-Tambaram Sector (Charnockite-Khondalite Suite)
- ii. Vellore-Tiruvannamalai Sector (Charnockite-Khondalite Suite)
  - 1. Thaniar R.F. Area (Charnockite-Khondalite Suite)
  - 2. Mamandur Area (Charnockite-Khondalite Suite)
- iii. Javadi Hills Sector (Charnockite-Khondalite Suite)
- iv. Yercaud-Kalrayan Hills Sector (Charnockite-Khondalite Suite)
- v. Gingee-Tirukkoilur Area (Migmatites)
- vi. Torappadi Ultramafic Complex (Ultramafic Suite)
  - 1. Tenmudiyanur Mafic (Ultramafic Suite)
  - 2. Kunnam Sector (Mafic Dykes)
- vii. Chengam-Tiruvannamalai Sector (Mafic Dykes)

c. Dharmapuri Shear Zone

- i. Vaniyambadi-Alangayam Sector (Charnockite Suite of Rocks)
- ii. Harur Dharmapuri Sector (Charnockite, Mafic Dukes)
- iii. Toppur Sector (Charnockite Suite of Rocks)
- iv. Harur-Uttangarai-Tiruppattur Sector (Epidote-Hornblende Gneiss)
- v. Vaniyambadi- Tiruppattur Sector (Mafic Dykes)
  - 1. Elagiri Complex (Alkaline-Carbonatite)
  - 2. Koratti Complex (Alkaline-Carbonatite)
  - 3. Samalpatti Complex (Alkaline-Carbonatite)
  - 4. Pakkanadu Complex (Alkaline-Carbonatite)

d. Dimbam-Tattakarai-Krishnagiri Block

- i. Bargur-Krishnagiri Sector
- ii. Veppanapalli-Maharajakadi Sector
- iii. Krishnagiri-Dharmapuri Sector
- iv. Hosur-Denkanikotta Sector
- v. Dharmapuri-Palakodu-Hogenakkal Sector
- vi. Tattakarai-Bhavani Sector
- vii. Bensi Malai- Ekkattur Sector
- viii. Sathyamangalam Sector
- ix. Talavadi Sector

e. Kaveri Shear Zone/ Kaveri Suture Zone

- i. Nilgiris-Bhavani Sector
- ii. Bhavani Salem Sector
    - 1. Bhavani Gneissic Complex
    - 2. Sathyamangalam Supracrustruals
    - 3. Sankakiri-Tiruchengode Granite
- iii. Sittampundi Anorthosite Complex
- iv. Kanjamalai Iron Ore Deposit
- v. Salem-Attur Sector

f. Madurai Block

- i. Dharapuram Sector
    - 1. Sivamalai Syenite Complex
    - 2. Vattamalai Granite
    - 3. Oddanchatram Anorthosite
- ii. Karur-Kodaikanal-Kambam Sector
    - 1. Karur-Palaiyam-Kiranur Area
    - 2. Vedasandur Area
    - 3. Vatalagundu-Ganguvarpatti-Kodaikanal Area
    - 4. Theni-Kambam Area
- iii. Andipatti-Varshanadu-Rajapalaiyam Sector

- iv. Tiruchirapalli-Pudukkottai-Melur Sector
    - 1. Kadavur Anorthosite Complex
    - 2. Puddukkottai-Pulangkurichi Area
    - 3. Melur-Alagarmalai Area
- v. Madurai-Tirunelveli Sector
    - 1. Sivaganga Area
    - 2. Tenkasi-Tirunelveli Area

g. Tirunelveli-Nagercoil Block

- i. Ambasamudram Sector
- ii. Nanguneri-Kudankulam Sector
- iii. Valliyur Sector
- iv. Arumanallur Sector
- v. Nagercoil Sector

Among them, Vellore-Tiruvannamalai, Javadi Hills, Yercaud-Kalrayan Hills, Gingee-Tirukkoilur Area, Torappadi Ultramafic Complex, Chengam-Tiruvannamalai, Bargur-Krishnagiri, Veppanapalli-Maharajakadi, Krishnagiri-Dharmapuri, Tattakarai-Bhavani, Nilgiris-Bhavani, Salem-Attur, Karur-Kodaikanal-Kambam, and Andipatti-Varshanadu-Rajapalaiyam are the regions with widespread distribution of rock art sites.

Older Supracrustal rocks

The charnockites and gneisses are the most abundant rocks occurring in Tamil Nadu. They contain dismembered units of older volcano-sedimentary rocks metamorphosed under different grades of metamorphism. They occur as linear bands and enclaves within the quartzo-feldspatic gneisses and consist of quartzites, with fuchsite (Cr-mica) or magnetite, kyanite/sillimanite schists, garnet-sillimanite-biotite gneisses, calc-granulite-crystalline limestone-marble and amphibolites-mafic granulite. While the quartzites, garnetiferous-sillimanite-biotite gneisses and calc-granulite-crystalline-limestone-marble are formed by metamorphism of sandstone-shale-limestone sequence deposited in ancient seas, the amphibolites as well as mafic granulites are metamorphosed volcanic rocks with basaltic composition.

Types of Quartzites

Three types of quartzites are encountered in Tamil Nadu. They are fuchsite quartzite which are green coloured rock rich in quartz found near Sathyamangalam – Gobichettipalayam – Salem region. Their colour is due to the presence of chromium bearing green coloured mica which is named as fuchsite and kyanite. The magnetite quartzites occur as linear bands and contain quartz and magnetite as essential minerals preserving the layering of the sandstones which are parental to the rocks. The accessory minerals are grunerite (iron rich mica), hypersthene and zircon. They have been reported from Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Erode, Salem, Tiruvannamalai, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Vellore, Ranipetai, Villupuram, Chengalpattu and Tiruvallur district.

While fuchsite quartzite and magnetite quartzites are found in the Late Archean granulite terrain in Northern and Central Zones, the Neo-Proterozoic terrain in the Southern Zone contains quartzites with specks of iron ore. In the Southern Zone the quartzites form a banded sequence with garniferous gneisses, calcareous gneisses and crystalline limestone and minor mafic granulites. The quartzites form ridges and can be traced as discontinuous bands extending from the cardamom hills, Cumbum, Varshanad, Periyakulam, Palani Hill ranges, Andipatti, Sirumalai where the belt branches into two, one going north towards Tuvarankurichchi, Kadavur and the other towards Madurai forming the Nagamalai and Alagarkoil hills.

Garnetiferous gneisses

These garnetiferous gneisses are also referred to as pelitic or semi-pelitic gneisses. These pelitic gneisses form long bands alternating with charnockite or gneisses in several parts of Tamil Nadu. They are more abundant in the Southern and Trivandrum-Kanyakumari belt and are also referred to as Kerala Khondalite belt. In the Northern and Central Zones, they are distributed in several regions including Pallavaram in Chennai, parts of Tiruvannmalai, Vellore and in the lofty mountains like, Servarayan malai hills, Kolli hills and Attur. Some of these gneisses under favourable conditions result in the formation of bauxite deposits. These rocks are essentially composed of quartz and feldspar with garnet, sillimanite and biotite as characteristic accessories. Graphite is often found as minor accessory mineral along with zircon, rutile, ilmenite and opaque oxides. In Sathyamangalam – Andiyur region, due to high pressure conditions of metamorphism, kyanite is found instead of sillimanite. Cordierite is found in magnesium rich rocks and are found rarely in the region north of Kaveri but are common in the Southern Zone. The rocks are more abundant in Trivandrum – Kanyakumari belt which is also known as Kerala – Khondalite belt. Here, both garnetiferous sillimanite gneisses and leptynites occur interbanded with charnockite and minor calc gneisses.

Calc-gneisses and crystalline limestone

The pure and impure calcareous sediments or limestones are metamorphosed to calc-gneisses, calc-granulites and crystalline limestones. These rocks are present as folded bands within the quartzo-feldspathic rocks. They are more abundant in the Southern Zone, south of Palghat – Kaveri Shear Zone, followed by the Central Zone and subordinate in the Northern Zone. The calc gneisses are banded rocks with alternating layers of mafic mineral rich layers with diopside with or without garnet, alternating with calcic-plagioclase, scapolite and calcite rich layers. They form individual bands and are associated with crystalline limestones. These limestones form raw material for cement industries and are found in Madukkarai, Coimbatore, Sangari in Salem, Palayam, in Karur district, Alangulam in Virudunagar and Thalaiyuthu in Tirunelveli district. The calc-gneisses with smaller bands of limestone are found associated with the metasedimentary formation extending from Cardamom hills to Alagar Koil and Kadavur.

Amphibolites

Amphibolites are metamorphic rocks which are green coloured, with schistose appearance, composed of amphibole and plagioclase as essential minerals. They form linear bands in gneissic rocks and also as lensoid bodies and smaller xenoliths. Rocks which are entirely composed of hornblende are called hornblendite and only plagioclase bearing rocks are called amphibolite. They occur in various sizes within gneisses ranging from linear bands to small inclusions. In Tamil Nadu they are found to occur within the gneisses in Krishnagiri-Gudiyattam, Tirutani areas.

Mafic Granulites

These rocks have been called by several names including basic charnockites, pyroxene granulites and two pyroxene granulites and are found to occur in charnockites. They are equivalent of amphibolites. The rocks are dark coloured, rich in mafic minerals and often exhibit layering.

The mafic granulites are sometimes associated with pyroxenites and are found to occur throughout the granulite facies terrain. They are found as discrete bands and are interbanded with garnetiferous gneisses and magnetite quartzites in the Northern and Central Zones. They are more abundant in the northern and Central Zones. The largest of these bands are found in Javadi hills, Dharmapuri district and Attur belt in Salem District. The mafic granulites occurring in the Southern Zone are closely associated and are co-folded with the meta-sedimentary rocks which are found in Cardamom hills - Andipatti – Kadavur - Alagarkoil belt.

Layered mafic-ultramafic complexes

The Central Zone is covered by garnetiferous mafic granulites which are associated with websterites, ultramafic rocks and calcic-meta anorthosites. They are found to occur as dismembered layers extending for about 300 km from Nilgiris, Mettupalayam, Gobichettipalayam, Bhavani, Namakkal, Thathaiyangarpet and terminates in Manamedu near Musiri. The ultramafic bodies have pods of garnetiferous mafic granulites and websterite. Folded bands of garnetiferous mafic granulites are found in Chalk Hills, Taramangalam, Bhavani, Gobichettipalayam and further west in Mettupalaiyam and in Nilgiris.

Calcic-Meta anorthosites

Anorthosites are monomineralic rocks. The gabbros with an increase in plagioclase grade into anorthosites through anorthositic gabbros and gabbroic anorthosites.

There are 7 anorthosite occurrences in Tamil Nadu. Of the seven occurrences, the Sittampundi complex and Bhavani are calcic anorthosites and the massif type anorthosites are found in Kadavur, Oddanchatram, Mamandur, Sembatti and near Kiranur in Pudukottai. These calcic-meta anorthosites occur in Sittampundi complex. The rock exhibits gneissic texture with hornblende as the accessory mineral, the plagioclase due to melting has been transformed into corundum and the plagioclase is also retrograded into clinozoisite.

Garnetiferous mafic granulites

These rocks contain garnet, clinopyroxene and plagioclase in various proportions. Some rocks may also contain hypersthene as an essential mineral and scapolite is also found. They are coarse grained rocks. These rocks have basaltic composition which are stable in the lower crust and upper mantle.

Websterite

Websterite are coarse grained with equant shaped minerals which appear like crystal accumulations. They have suffered extensive hydration and have been converted into amphibolite and steatite. They occur as rounded and oval shaped hillocks and also as pods within ultramafic rocks occurring south of Sittampundi. They are more abundant in the region between Salem and Gobichettipalayam. The steatite which is soft is locally used by artisans for making pots and small artefacts.

Chromitites

They are coarse grained composed of chromite/chrome spinel, Mg-hornblendes and pyroxene. The chromitites are found as lens shaped bodies and pods are more abundant in the eastern part of the anorthosite band. A largest of these bands are found to occur in Karungalpatti. An interesting aspect is the presence of platinum group minerals which have a concentration ranging from 0.5 to 2.0 gm per tonne with concentration rising to 25 g/tonne in some places.

Ultramafic bodies

Ultramafic bodies occur to the south of Sittampundi complex and they contain bands and pods of websterite, garnetiferous mafic granulites and garnet amphibolite. They are criss-crossed by veins of magnesite. In addition, several Ultramafic bodies are found to occur in the Central Zone and Northern Zones. The ultramafic bodies of the Northern Zone, include the Thenmudiyanur ultramafic complex, which is a zoned complex, the Torappadi complex associated with gabbros have characteristics of layered type, the Chalk Hills, Samalpatti, Yelagiri and Pakkanadu ultramafics are ultramafic-alkaline rocks-with or without carbonatite complexes. The rocks of the ultramafic complexes include peridotites, dunites, pyroxenites, gabbros and anorthositic gabbro. Most of the ultramafic complexes host magnesite veins of which the Chalk Hills deposit is the largest.

Quartzo-feldspathic gneisses

The quartzo-feldspathic gneisses are the dominant rocks containing the layers and enclaves of older supracrustal rocks and are intruded by intrusive rocks. The gneisses were metamorphosed under amphibolite facies first and later under granulite facies. The granulite facies gneisses are known as charnockites which contain hypersthene as a characteristic accessory mineral.

Hornblende – biotite gneisses

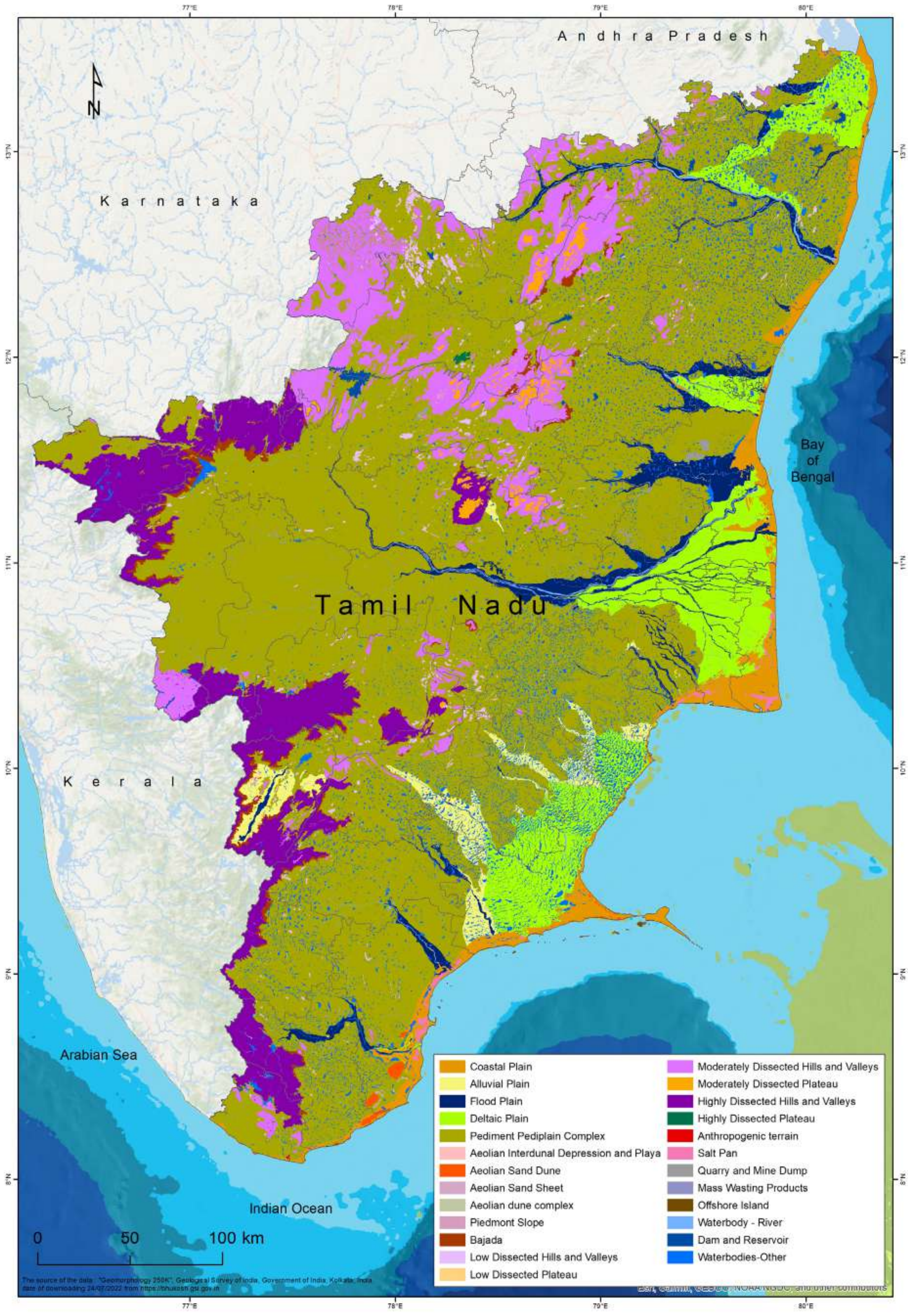
These gneissic rocks are found in Krishnagiri and in the region north of the Palar River in Vellore, Ranipet and Tiruvallur district. They form rounded hillocks and are less jointed and deformed whereas the charnockites occurring south in Dharmapuri, Javadis and Polur form rugged mountains with steep faces. The rocks occurring in Krishnagiri district are also mineralogically distinct. The gneisses in Gudiyatham, Sholingur and Tirutani areas are grey coloured fissile gneisses often exhibiting banded structure and hence differ from the Krishnagiri gneisses in which deformational structures are less significant. The gneisses occurring in the Southern Zone are not only hornblende biotite bearing but also contain garnet and biotite as characteristic accessories.

Charnockite

Charnockite massifs are encountered in the Nilgiris, Denkanikotta - Hogenakkal mountains in Dharmapuri, Jawadhu malai in Vellore and Chennai – Chengalpattu hills, Servarayan malai, Chitteri malai, Kalvarayan malai, Jarugumalai, Bodamalai, Kollimalai and Pachaimalai in the Northern and Central Zone. In addition to the mountains, they are also found as low-level outcrops in the eroded pediplains. In the Southern Zone, Charnockite massifs form the Anamalai, Palani hill ranges, Sirumalai, Varushanad, Cardamom hills, Podigai, Agasthiyamalai hills and hills of Nagarkoil.

Geomorphology of Tamil Nadu

The geomorphology of Tamil Nadu comprises the Western Ghats which define the western boundary, the Eastern Ghats in the north and north east, the landforms carved by the rivers which originate from the mountains, the sedimentary plains which are present in the eastern margin between the deposits made by the riverine and coastal process (Map 2.2). The rich and varied geomorphological settings favoured the formation of several rock shelters and these rock shelters were effectively utilized by our ancestors to express their thoughts in paintings and engravings.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Andhra Pradesh
Karnataka
Tamil Nadu
Kerala
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
Indian Ocean
0
50
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Coastal Plain
Alluvial Plain
Flood Plain
Deltaic Plain
Pediment Pediplain Complex
Aeolian Interdunal Depression and Playa
Aeolian Sand Dune
Aeolian Sand Sheet
Aeolian dune complex
Piedmont Slope
Bajada
Low Dissected Hills and Valleys
Low Dissected Plateau
Moderately Dissected Hills and Valleys
Moderately Dissected Plateau
Highly Dissected Hills and Valleys
Highly Dissected Plateau
Anthropogenic terrain
Salt Pan
Quarry and Mine Dump
Mass Wasting Products
Offshore Island
Waterbody - River
Dam and Reservoir
Waterbodies-Other
Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

The source of the data : "Geomorphology 250K", Geological Survey of India, Government of India, Kolkata, India date of downloading 24/07/2022 from https://bhukosh.gsi.gov.in

Map 2.2 Geomorphology of Tamil Nadu

Distribution of Mountains and their Geomorphology

The uplands in Tamil Nadu have been classified as Western and Eastern Ghats. The Western Ghats define the western boundary of the state and comprise the Nilgiris, Anamalai, Palani hill ranges, Cardamom hills, Varshanadu-Andipatti-Alagar Koil hills and Pothigai mountains. These hill ranges are separated by valleys or passes such as Palghat, Cumbum, Sengottai pass, and smaller valleys include Achankoil, Thenmalai, Aralvaimozhi passes. The Eastern Ghats comprise the hills that are found in the eastern part north of Sathyamangalam – Gobichettipalayam towns and are named as Talavadi-Thattakarai – Tamirakkarai hill ranges extending north to Dharmapuri district, the Javadu hills, Servarayan hills, Chitteri hills, Kalvarayan hills, Kolli hills, Pachaimalai hills and residual several hills which are located in Salem, Erode, Tiruppur and Coimbatore districts. The Eastern Ghats merge with Western Ghats in the Nilgiris. In addition, the extensions of the Karnataka and Andhra plateaus are present as Dharmapuri plateau. Coimbatore and Madurai region also forms a plateau with residual hills and hillocks.

The northern part of Western Ghats forming the Nilgiris, Anamalai, Palani hill ranges and the hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats are made up of charnockites and gneisses. Most of these massifs are formed by tectonic uplift. The Eastern Ghats have structural control and are formed by folding. The interface of folding in two directions produces oval shaped mountains for example, Kanjamalai in Salem. The gneiss rocks occurring in Krishnagiri and northern part of Vellore in Peranampet-Gudiyattam belt form massive hills with rounded peaks whereas the charnockite hills of Dharmapuri and southern part of Vellore districts have rugged peaks and are dissected by numerous fractures.

Quartzitic ridges of few hundred meters height are traced for several tens of kilometres. They include the Kanjamalai, Godumalai and Tirthamalai banded magnetite quartzites. Similarly, quartzite ridges are found in Theni and Madurai districts extending from Cardamon hills eastward as Varshanad–Andipatti-Nagamalai and Alagar Koil hills. These quartzites are part of a metasedimentary sequence comprising quartzite, garnetiferous pelitic gneisses, calc gneisses, limestone and mafic granulites found in the charnockite as swaths in the southern part of Western Ghats in Palani hill ranges, Cardamom hills, and pothigai hills.

Intrusive formations are found in the northern and central part of Tamil Nadu eg. Elagiri hills, Sankari-Tiruchengodu granite dome and Suryamalai 40 km southwest of Salem, the granite hills of Gingee region and several small granite plutons like Marudamalai granites, Coimbatore and Punjaipuliampatti granites, Erode district. Syenite mesas are also found to occur in Vellore, Dharmapuri and Salem districts of which Elagiri forms a mesa and several hills with syenite are found in the area southeast of Mettur, Pikkili and Sivanmalai. Granites and granitic gneisses are also found to occur in the southern part of Tamil Nadu in Pulankurichi, Sivaganga district, Ayyarmalai in Karur district, Dindugul granite, Melur granites of Madurai region.

The jointed rocks of Ginjee granite form conical hills which are covered by huge boulders which are staked one above the other. Balancing boulders are found in many places in the region. The Dolerite intrusions are found as swarms in parts of Northern Tamil Nadu in Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore, Salem also form linear ridges a few kilometers to few tens of kilometers but are generally less than 50 m in height.

The geomorphology is hence controlled by the tectonic uplift of the mountains, dissection of the crust by the faults and fractures, structure and denudation process. The landforms present in the mountains are escarpments, plateaus, river valleys and valley fills and bajada. The escarpments are step faces along which vertical uplift has taken place. They are generally found on the flanks of the masses and rarely forming the boundary of planation surfaces. Uplift along the escarpments form planation surfaces. For example, Nilgiris has three plantation surfaces, viz. Gudalur, Coonoor and Uthagamandalam and Kotagiri surfaces. The plateau landforms are further classified as highly dissected, moderately dissected and low dissected plateaus based on the fractures which have dissected the mountain top. While rugged mountains with peaks are characteristic of most mountains, the Nilgiris plateau and parts of Sevroys, Kolli and Palani Hills have a rolling topography on top which is due to the presence of bauxite or laterite caps. Nilgiris plateau is also unique as it is characterised by thick soil cover indicating the rate of denudation is more than erosion.

Rivers which drain the mountains carve a valley that coincides with a tectonic fracture zone. As rainfall is high in the mountains due to orographic precipitation. Therefore, the mountain ranges are the locations where mighty rivers originate. They carve deep valleys, gorges, waterfalls, cascades and rapids when they descend from the mountains. While, Moyar river valley, Katteri and Kundha river in Nilgiris and Surli river near Cumbum are good examples of river valleys. These rivers erode the plateau and areas which escaped erosion form residual hills. The hills which occur in Hogenakkal and Mettur are the edge of the Dharmapuri plateau which was carved by the rivers draining the region. The Nagavathi river joins Kaveri in Dharmapuri, which needs special mention as it has formed a 100 ft deep valley and headward erosion of the river may reach Ponnaiyar river capturing it into the Kaveri river system. The valleys in the mountainous regions are often filled with sediments wherever the gradient of the river becomes gentle forming valley fills. The Cumbum valley is an important feature which forms a NE-SW trending broad valley with graben like structure defined by the Cardomom hills on the Northwest and Varshanad hills in the southeast. The Surli river which flows in the region has a broad flood plain with thick valley fill of fluvial sediments. The bajada zones are found in the flanks of the hills in semi-arid regions are more common in the Eastern Ghats and along the residual hills and are an accumulation of rubble which roles down the steep slopes by gravity.

Major gaps in Tamil Nadu include Palghat Gap located between the Nilgiris and Anamalai ranges, Attur valley with Servarayan-Chitteri-Kalvarayan hills in the north and Bidamalai-Jarugumalai-Kolli Malai-Pachamalai hills in the south and the Vaniyambadi - Tirupattur – Uthangarai valley bounded by the Krishnagiri plateau on the west and Jawadhu malai in the east.

Landslides are becoming more frequent in the mountainous terrains particularly in the Nilgiris where hundreds of slides occur during torrential rains. The landslides include rock slides, debris slides, earth slides and flows. The increase in landslide events is attributed to land use changes and urbanisation in the region. While landslides are numerous in the Nilgiris, a lesser number of landslides occur in Kodaikanal, Servarayan and Kolli hills.

Pediplains

Plateaus are elevated terrains which are relatively flat or gently sloping. Plateaus are found in mountainous terrains occupying the denuded top of mountains such as the Nilgiri, Kodaikkanal, Servarayan malai, Kolli malai and Yelagiri. They form extensive pediplains formed by faulting and vertical uplift of crustal segments along east-west trending Toppur. Eroded mountainous regions with residual hills form a plateau in Coimbatore, Erode, Tiruppur, Salem, Namakkal, Karur, and Dindugul districts which can be named as Kongu pateau. The uplands from the foothills of Cardamom hills in Virudunagar, Teni, Madurai forms the Madurai Plateau. A plateau region may have different elevations. For example, the Nilgiris plateau can be further classified as Gudalur, Coonoor, Kotagiri, Kundhah and Uthagamandalam plateaus based on their elevation. Similarly, the Dharmapuri plateau can be considered as two segments viz., Krishnagiri -Dharmapuri level and Soolagiri level.

Pediplain with occasional rocky outcrops and residual hills are found in the land eroded by fluvial processes. The geomorphic units found are deeply buried pediments, moderately buried pediments, shallow buried pediments, floodplain and residual hills. The residual hills are classified as inselbergs, which are isolated hills in a pediplain, denudational hills with domal shape, formed by erosional forces, structural hills which are formed consequent to folding and linear ridges formed in the presence of rocks like quartzites, mafic granulites, dolerites resistant to weathering. Dome shaped hills are characteristically found in the Krishnagiri region as well as in areas with granite and syenite intrusions. Granite intrusions are found to occur in Tirutani, Arcot, Ginjee, Sankagiri-Tiruchengodu, Madurai, and Pudukottai areas. Structural hills are found in Kongu plateau, Madurai plateau and Tirunelveli. In Attur valley doubly plunging folds form elliptical hills and basins. Linear ridges of metasedimentary sequence containing quartzite are common in Teni and Madurai region. The dolerite dykes form linear ridges in Vellore, Viluppuram, Tiruvannamalai, Mettur and Salem areas.

Rivers

There are 17 major river basins in Tamil Nadu. These are: Chennai basin, Palar, Varaha Nadhi, Pennaiyar, Vellar, Kaveri, Agniyar, Pambar, Kottakaraiyar, Vaigai, Gundar, Vaippar, Kallar, Porunai, Nambiar, Kodayar and Parambikulam - Aliyar. Of which Araniyar – Kusasthalaiyar River system, Palar River, Pennaiyar, Vellar, Kaveri river system, Vaigai and Porunai are important (Map 2.3). While most of these rivers flow eastward and reach the Bay of Bengal, Palk Bay or Gulf of Mannar, the Kodaiyar is a west flowing river and flows into the Arabian Sea. The Parambikkulam-Aliyar rivers and Periyar originate in Tamil Nadu but flow into Kerala.

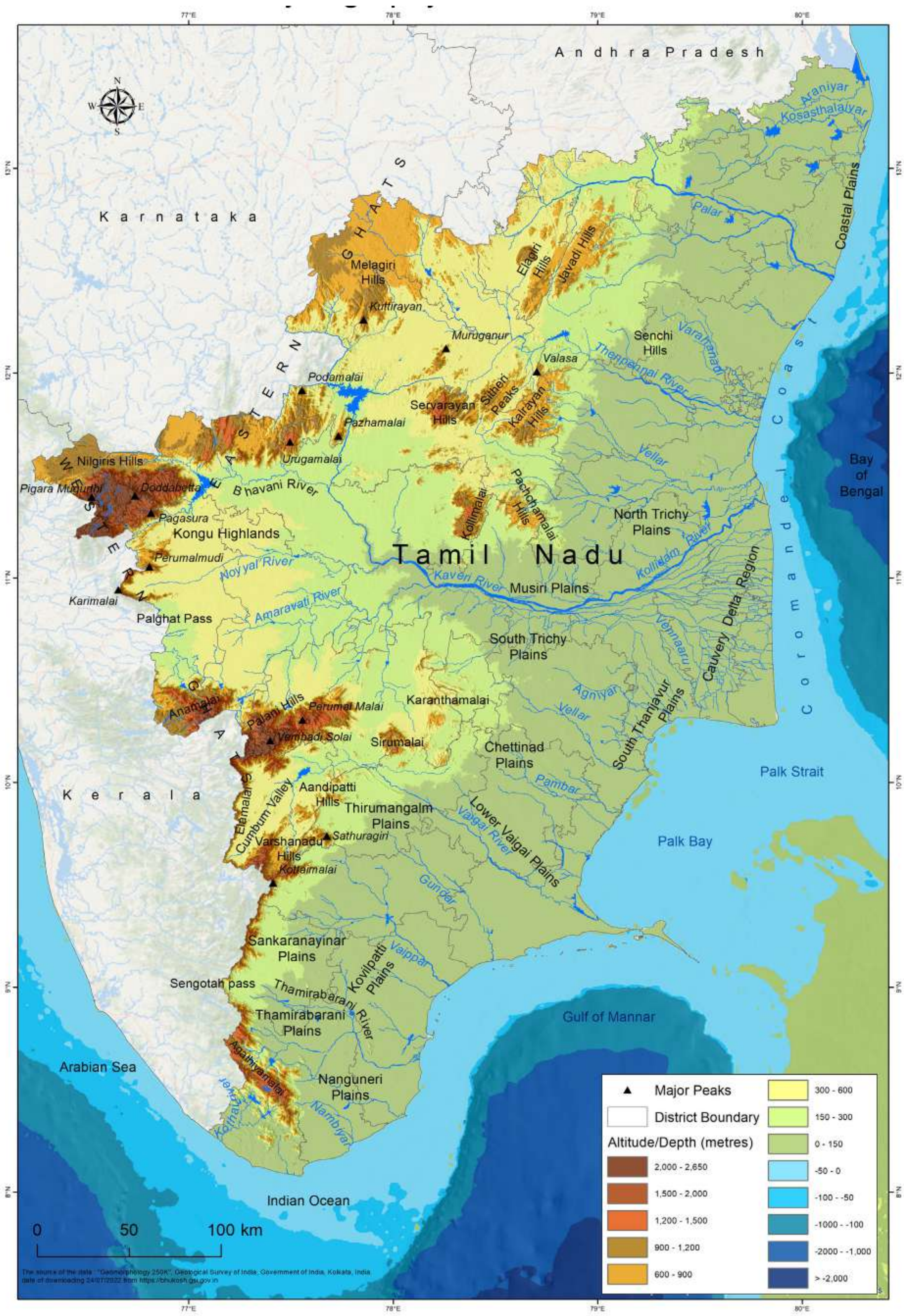
The Kaveri River System

The largest river system in Tamil Nadu is Kaveri river which originates in Karnataka and as it flows in Karnataka plateau it is joined by many tributaries including Harangi, Hemavati and Kabini. It enters Karnataka - Tamil Nadu state boundary in Dharmapuri district west of Hogenakkal and flows along the boundary for over 60 km and finally enters the Mettur reservoir. As it descends from the Mysore plateau to Kongu plateau, it is rejuvenated as it flows from an elevation of 600 to 200 m at Mettur. From Mettur reservoir it flows in a gorge veers to SW direction and takes an abrupt turn near Bhavani town flowing in SE direction initially and latter in a easterly direction going round the Sankagiri-Tiruchengodu granite dome. As it flows in Tamil Nadu, it is joined by many rivers of which Bhavani, Noyyal and Amaravathi rivers are important. The river reaches Tiruchirapalli, where it bifurcates into Kaveri and Kollidam. However, the two rivers join and split once again. Fifteen kilometres from Tiruchirapalli, the river reached the Chola era dam, the Kallani where excess waters are diverted to Kallanai during floods. The river reaches the delta stage where the waters are drained by several distributaries forming a network of natural rivers and manmade canals which irrigate what is called Granary of South India. While Kaveri is reduced as a small channel Kollidam larger carrying capacity and drains the waters during floods the main distributaries are Kaveri, Arasalar and Vennar. The other distributaries are Virasolanar, Uppanar, Nandalar, Tirumalairajan Ar, Vettar, Kedurai Ar, Pandavai Ar, Vedaranyam canal and Harichandra Nadi Manniyar, Vennar, Vettar, Nattar, Mudikondan and Kudamuruti. The Vedaranyam canal is a sea level canal located sub parallel to the coast. In the southern part of the Kaveri delta wetlands which are called Vedaranyam or Muthupet lagoon which is known for the presence of mangrove swamps making it one of the ecologically sensitive areas. Small distributaries of the Kaveri which are Pamaniyar, Koraiyar, Kilaithankiyar and Marakkakoraiyar join the lagoon.

The rivers have dumped large quantity of sediments. The deposits are made in basins formed by alternating ridges initially as valley fills and subsequently as bedded marine deposits. Studies have shown that Kaveri has changed its course moving southward by successive river capturing. The migration resulted in the formation of several basins in which sedimentation has taken place in the valleys like Pulicat basin, Ariyalur - Pondicherry, Trangambadi, Thanjavur, Nagapattinam basin, separated by ridges. The Ramnad – Palk Bay depression is also a sedimentary basin.

Araniyar-Kosasthalaiyar River System

The Proto-Kaveri flowed in the northern part of Tamil Nadu emptying in the area which is now Pulicat lake. This basin is covered by the Holocene alluvium of Araniyar – Kosasthalaiyar River system. The fluvio-marine deposits in the delta have characteristics of large braided river system the size and thickness indicate, that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Andhra Pradesh
Karnataka
Kerala
Tamil Nadu
EASTERN GHATS
WESTERN GHATS
Araniyar
Kosasthalaiyar
Palar
Coastal Plains
Melagiri Hills
Kuttirayan
Elagiri Hills
Javadi Hills
Muruganur
Senchi Hills
Varahanadi
Valasa
Thenpennai River
Podamalai
Servarayan Hills
Sitteri Peaks
Kalrayan Hills
Pazhamalai
Urugamalai
Vellar
Nilgiris Hills
Pigara Mukurthi
Doddabetta
Pagasura
Bhavani River
Kongu Highlands
Kollimalai
Pachchamalai Hills
North Trichy Plains
Perumalmudi
Noyyal River
Kaveri River
Musiri Plains
Kollidam River
Karimalai
Palghat Pass
Amaravati River
South Trichy Plains
Vennaaru
Cauvery Delta Region
Coromandel Coast
Bay of Bengal
Anamalai
Palani Hills
Perumal Malai
Karanthamalai
Agniyar
Vellar
Vembadi Solai
Sirumalai
Chettinad Plains
South Thanjavur Plains
Palk Strait
Elamalai
Cumbum Valley
Aandipatti Hills
Thirumangalm Plains
Pambar
Lower Vaigai Plains
Vaigai River
Varshanadu Hills
Sathuragiri
Kottaimalai
Palk Bay
Gundar
Sankaranayinar Plains
Kovilpatti Plains
Vaippar
Sengotah pass
Thamirabarani River
Thamirabarani Plains
Gulf of Mannar
Arabian Sea
Agasthiyamalai
Kodaiyar
Kotraiyar
Nanguneri Plains
Nambiyar
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District Boundary
Altitude/Depth (metres)
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1,500 - 2,000
1,200 - 1,500
900 - 1,200
600 - 900
300 - 600
150 - 300
0 - 150
-50 - 0
-100 - -50
-1000 - -100
-2000 - -1,000
> -2,000

The source of the data : "Geomorphology 250K", Geological Survey of India, Government of India, Kolkata, India date of downloading 24/07/2022 from https://bhukosh.gsi.gov.in

Map 2.3 Rivers in Tamil Nadu

a mighty river flowed in the region. But this river has been reduced to a small river which are distributaries of the mighty river has migrated southward. The Pulicat lake is an ecologically sensitive area in Tamil Nadu but the mangroves are under threat from human activities and industrialisation.

Palar River

The Palar River originates on the Kolar plateau of Karnataka. It is joined by Ponnai, Goundinya Nadhi, Malattar, Cheyyar and Killiyar are the tributaries. It empties into the Bay of Bengal at Cuddalore. Construction of dams by upper riparian states has resulted in the destruction of the aquatic system and only during heavy monsoon rains some flow of water is found. The sand deposits which still exist in spite of active sand mining provider water to the urban centres and industries in Vellore, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu districts. The Cheyyar river which originates in the Jawadhu malai, makes a significant contribution to the river waters. Studies suggest that the Cooum river which flows in Chennai city was a distributary of Palar and the channel which connects the two rivers have dried up.

Pennaiyar (Then Pennai) River

Then Pennai originates in the Nandi hills of Karnataka and flows through Bengaluru, Hoskote and enters Tamil Nadu in Krishnagiri district. It is joined by 14 tributaries on its way of which Pambar, Kambainallur river, Vanniyar and Turinjalar make major ones. When it reaches Villupuram district, it splits into a few distributaries named Malattar which is translated as barren river which disappears in the tertiary sedimentary formations. A channel of the river connects itself to Gadilam river. The river is an important resource for Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Its catchment in Karnataka includes the region which forms the eastern and southern parts of Bengaluru city, Hoskote, Kolar and Bangarapet. The domestic and industrial effluents influence the quality of water in the river as it reaches Tamil Nadu. Several minor reservoirs have been constructed by Tamil Nadu in Krishnagiri district of which the one at Krishnagiri is larger. A major reservoir is also located across the river in Sattanur. These dams facilitate the irrigation of lands in Krishnagiri, Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram, Cuddalore as well as Puducherry UT. The river confluences with the Bay of Bengal in boundary between Cuddalore and Puducherry.

The Araniyar-Kosasthalaiyar-Cooum river system, Palar river and Pennaiyar rivers are characterised by wide channels and extensive accumulation of sand which indicates that the rivers were not ephemeral as now, but had copious water flow and for longer duration.

The Vellar River

The Vellar river originates in the Chitteri, Kalrayan, Jarugumalai, Bodamalai, Kolli malai and Pachaimalai hills in Salem, Namakkal and Villupuram districts. The main tributaries are Manimuktha, Gomuktha, Swetha Nadhi, Chinnar and Anaivari Odai. When it reaches Cuddalore district it takes a meandering course, finally branching into a network of channels forming an extensive wetland ecosystem and finally reaches Bay of Bengal. The wetlands of Vellar river merge with the wetlands of Kollidam river forming the Vellar-Kollidam wetland ecosystem which is well known for the presence of mangrove forests.

Rivers between Kaveri and Vaigai

Agniyar, Southern Vellar, Pambar and Kottakaraiyar are the rivers which join the Palk Bay. They originate in the uplands of Tiruchirapalli, Pudukkottai, Dindugul and Madurai districts and flow southeast. they join the sea, they form micro deltas that protrude into the sea. Mangrove vegetation is found in the deltas and the Palk Bay is unique being a site of seagrass which supports the habitat for dugong a marine mammal.

The Vaigai River

The Vaigai river originates in the Cardamom, Vashanad, Palani Hills and flows through the Cumbam valley as Surliar and Theniyar rivers and is joined by Manjalar and Varahanadhi rivers from Palani hills. The river receives water from the west flowing Periyar river. A tunnel diverts the water eastward through a tunnel and penstock pipes into Surliar river. The Vaigai dam which is constructed along the river and the water is utilised to meet the needs of irrigation and water supply for the urban centres. It flows through Theni and Madurai districts and finally enters Ramanathapuram district feeding the tanks in the region. It empties into the Palk Bay near Pamban. However, the flow of water into the river in Ramanathapuram has been greatly reduced and the river becomes dry, due to infiltration into the sedimentary formations of the coastal margin.

Rivers between Vaigai and Porunai

The rivers, Gundar, Vaippar and Kallar join the Gulf of Mannar. Gundar originates in the eastern slopes of Varshanad, Andipatti and Nagamalai hills. The important towns located on its course are Tirumangalam, Tiruparankundram, Usilampatti and Mudugulathur. It branches into several distributary channels when it enters the coastal zone feeding hundreds of lakes which are formed in deltaic zone as alluvial lobes. The Vaippar originates from the Vashanad hill slopes in Virudunagar district flows in Virudunagar and Thoothukkudi districts and is joined by Arjuna river. There are a few check dams constructed for utilisation for agriculture. It joins the Gulf of Mannar near Sippikulam. Thoothukudi is an important town located at the mouth of the river. The Kallar river basin is drained not only by Kallar but also by the streams Korampallamaru (Upparodai) and Chalikulamaru. As it enters the coastal zone few lakes are present but the numbers are much fewer when compared with Gundar river basin. Where the rivers join marginal marine environment with brackish water lagoons have developed and salt pans are present in good numbers.

The Porunai River

The river has the distinction of being a perennial river in Tamil Nadu. It originates in the southern most of Western Ghats in Podigai and Agasthiya malai. It is joined by Manimuthar, Servalar, Gadana Nadhi, Pachaiyar and Chittar and several minor ones. In the youthful stage as the river descends the mountains, there are several waterfalls which are exotic sites that attract tourists from all over South India. Kutralam water falls located in the course of Chittar river in particular is has several waterfalls and taking a bath in the water with medicinal properties is a practice adopted by the local community. Several dams were also constructed in the region as well as in the plains. The river forms the lifeline of Tirunelveli-Palayankottai city as well as the towns which are located on its banks. The floodplain of the river supports intensive agricultural activity and several towns are situated along its banks. The river forms a network of channels and tidal influx results in the formation of a mangrove ecosystem. Porunai confluences with Gulf of Mannar in a place called Palayakayal.

Rivers south of Porunai

Nambiar and Kothaiyar river basins are the two rivers flowing in the area south of Porunai river basin. There are four rivers in the Nambiar river basin, they are Karamaniyar, Nambiar and Hanuman nadhi. They are independent rivers and are not connected naturally. However, through canals, Karamaniyar and Hanuman nadhi receive water from Manimuktha and Kodaiyar respectively. All the rivers and a few more streams empty into Gulf of Mannar.

Kothaiyar river also contains several rivers and streams which originate in Agasthiya malai and flow south and meet the Arabian Sea. The important rivers are Kodaiyar, Porunai (distinguished from the east flowing Porunai river in Tirunelveli – Thenkasi districts as Kuzhithuraiar river), Paralaiyar, Pazhayar and Valliyar. Several dams are located in the mountainous region and the Tirparappu waterfalls is an important tourist centre.

Uplands on the Continental Margin

The continental margin of Tamil Nadu contains several sedimentary basins in which a thick sequence of sediments has been deposited.

In Tamil Nadu, these sedimentary basins are found to outcrop all along the east coast of Tamil Nadu of which Villupuram-Puducherry region, Virudachalam-Cuddalore–Neyveli region and Ariyalur – Jayamkondan region form extensive uplands. The sedimentary formations are partly covered by alluvium in Arani – Kosasthalai rivers in Tiruvallur district, Kaveri river in Mayiladuthurai-Nagapattinam, Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts, by the rivers flowing into Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar. These form isolated inliers eroded by the rivers and covered by alluvial deposits. They are often recognised by the occurrence of laterite capping. The Avadi formation near Chennai, Sivagangai formations in Sivagangai and Pudukottai districts form partly eroded uplands influenced by the rivers flowing in their regions.

The sedimentary formations which comprise thick shales, sandstones and minor limestone, are undeformed with horizontal bedding. The lack of folding results in a monotonously flat terrain. As the deposition of the sediments is made when the sea level was a few hundred meters above present mean sea level, they form uplands with an elevation up to 60 m in Puducherry, 100 m in Virudachalam – Neyveli – Cuddalore and Ariyalur formations. They can be termed as sediplains and in Tamil Nadu they for uplands. Faulting of the formation has resulted in the formation of mounds or escarpments and are seen near Cuddalore in Tiruvandipuram and Capper quarry area. The surface of the uplands contains laterite cover. Mining of the laterite and erosion by streams in some places result in the formation of bad land topography. The bad lands are observed in Ariyalur basin near Karai village and in Panruti area due to clay mining. It is interesting that the climatic conditions were favourable for the formation and preservation of petroleum and lignite deposits in the basins. In Vattakottai in Kanyakumari and Tiruchendur in Thoothukkudi district, wave cut notches or minor escarpments are found due to marine erosion where the sedimentary rocks are exposed to wave action.

Denudational and Depositional Plains

Pediplains

The pediplains are formed by erosion of the mountains and occupy the areas where lofty mountains existed and hence are described earlier. Peneplains are more matured with rare occurrences of inselbergs and areas with stony waste. It is often difficult to distinguish them from the pediplains. As denudation continues the pediplain becomes a monotonously flat gently sloping terrain encompassing many mountains. They are also common in sedimentary terrains which often contain horizontal bedding as well as less resistant rocks. In Tamil Nadu, the peneplains occur over the sedimentary formations of Gondwana age belonging to Sriperumbudur formation which form monotonous plains in Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts and over the uplands of Cretaceous and Tertiary formations in the coastal districts.

Flood Plains

Flood plains are found immediately adjacent to the rivers and are areas that are inundated during floods. In pediplains and foothills of mountains that extend from the river bank to the base of the valley formed by the erosion of the river in the past. Floodplains extend laterally into pediplain, peneplain and alluvial plains depending on the stage of the river. All the rivers have a floodplain and their extent depends on the mightiness of the river and stage. The floodplain is well developed in the deltaic stage of the rivers. But the construction of dams by upper riparian states has made floods less frequent. Since the floodplains are characterised by the presence of gravel, sand, silt and clay and are highly productive due to soil fertility they are encroached by people.

Alluvial Plains

The alluvial plains are depositional landforms. The slope of the terrain becomes flat reducing the velocity of the river. The deposition of the sediments results in breaching of the banks and water overflows the river flowing in the plains and carving a new channel. This results in splitting of the river into distributaries and the flood plains of the channels merge. The river may reach what is known as braided river system with meandering channels which are often unstable changing course. The channels are often abandoned or converted into ox-bow lakes. In Tamil Nadu as the rivers reach the sea, they encounter the uplands in the continental margin. The river, erodes the upland initially to form its drainage channel and deposition occurs at a later stage.

Though rivers with characters of a braided river system are not present, oxbow lakes and abandoned channels which are typical of a braided river are found in the Arani-Kosasthalai rivers and Vellar. Due to proper management of the channels of the distributaries of Kaveri river such geomorphology has not developed in Kaveri delta. The choking of the river due to deposition of silt makes water flow as sheetwash and as the water flows during floods it deposits sediments whenever it encounters a barrier. Over a period of time the accumulation results in the formation of a ridge with interlobial depression in upslope direction. As the sea level falls, successive lobes were formed. The delta are arranged in a concentric pattern and hundreds of such lakes can be found to day all along the Vaigai, Pambar, Vellar and Gundar rivers in Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai and Pudukkottai districts. Typical examples of alluvial plains are Kaveri, Vellar, Araniyar-Kosasthalaiyar system, Vaigai and the other rivers that flow into the Palk Bay. The rivers flowing into the Palk Bay are considered remnants of the migration of the river Vaigai.

Coastal Plains

The coastal plains contain the beach front with deposits of sand and the estuarine mud deposits which are formed in the lagoonal system. The beach deposits are dynamic and are formed using the unconsolidated sand which is transported by the rivers which drain the area. The waves splash the sands towards the shore and the wind transports it further inland as longitudinal ridges. During the past 1 million years, due to the cyclic changes in the orbital configuration the earth has been experiencing alternating glacial and inter-glacial cycles with a periodicity of ~100 thousand years. During the last inter-glacial approximately 120,000 years before present, the sea level was higher and the sea transgressed into the land several kilometres. As the earth cooled, the sea level regressed and as it regressed successive shore ridges were formed. The resulting landform is a strandline and if several strandlines are present, it becomes a strand plain. Such landforms are best developed in the Sriharikotta island of Andhra Pradesh whose southern extension falls in the Pazhaverkkadu Lake region in Tiruvallur District. A 5 km wide strand plains are noticed in Cuddalore district and in the Vedaranyam region in Nagai, Tiruvarur and Thanjavur districts.

Region Specific Studies: Dharmapuri-Krishnagiri region

The maximum number of rock art sites were brought to light in Dharmapuri-Krishnagiri zone. Therefore, special attention is paid in describing the region.

Litho units of the study area form a part of Precambrian terrain covering a major part of Eastern-Ghats. The area under investigation is a typical metamorphic terrain, intruded by acid and basic discordant hypabyssals. Granitic and Khondalitic Gneisses along with amphibolites constitute the major rock types of Bargur and Maharajakadai in Krishnagiri district (Subramaniam and Selvan 2001). The rocks are of gneissic composition forming a part of Pandiyan Mobile Belt in northern Tamil Nadu (Ramakrishnan and Vaidyanadhan 2008).

Dolerites are the common discordant entities. They are highly weathered and fragmented wherever exposed. The spheroidal weathering with exfoliated peel is frequent on cropped out surfaces, and fetches a red loam. Invariably on fresh surfaces they show hard and compact massiveness with conchoidal fracture and hackly edges. The fine needles of plagioclases with a typical sheen are identifiable under magnifiers.

From hilltops, huge boulders are dragged down by gravity, became stabilized in hill bottoms or sometimes are trapped along the hill slopes. Such rock shelters with stable bases and sloping tops are huge enough to protect objects underneath them from erosive forces of sun, rain and wind. It is pertinent to point out here that rock paintings are observed in a few shelters and not in all.

The upper surfaces of almost all shelters are naturally dented with ovoid and sub-ovoid depressions produced by differential erosive action of rain. The xenoliths occult within the upper surface of the shelters have suffered deep weathering and subsequently lime soils get accumulated under these shelters by termite action. These calcareous soils are yellow coloured and readily effervesce with acid. At the foothills, hard and sharp archaic stone implements were collected. They are very fine grained, holocrystalline, melanocratic rock pieces, and on close observation with magnifiers, identified as dolerites. They are hard, massive and have rugged edges. These hackly stone pieces were the hunting tools of ancients.

Geomorphologically, the dolmen site of Mallachandram village has an undulating topography. Both positive and negative relief structures are prominent. The general slope of the area is south and southeast, surrounded by intermundane valleys, however, valley plains spread along the west and southwest. From the foothills, bajadas, shallow pediments, moderately buried pediments and deeply buried pediments have been successively juxtaposed towards the plains. The dried stream courses indicate that they are consequent drainages. Incidentally, they follow the strike of the outcrops. The sources of irrigation are bore wells and open wells. Bore wells are normally found in and around the moderately buried pediment areas. The valley plains are irrigated by dug-cum-bore wells.

The geomorphology of dolman site at Boothigan malai is characterized with variegating composite slopes and highly undulating hill-tops. But, the dolmen bearing site is located over the table land in the vicinity of precipitous escarpments. It has highly dissected and rolled bouldery relief extrapolated to flat plains with appreciable thick soils. From the foothills to the top of the site it is steep with few small breaks of tablelands. Owing to the undulating nature, composite slope and deep weathering, the forest cover has vegetation which varies from scrubs to trees with medium canopy.

Biodiversity

Common trees found in the vicinity of both dolmen sites and rock shelters of the study area include Albizia amara, Lannea coromandelica, Senna siamea, Senna occidentalis, Strychnos nux-vomica, Pongamia pinnata, Syzygium cuminii, Tamarindus indica, Annona squamosa and Thespesia populnea. Apart from them in near by villages the trees like Acacia nilotica, Azadirachta indica, Bambusa bambos, Borassus flabellifer, Ficus religiosa, F. benghalensis, Lannea coromandelica, and Strychnos nux-vomica, are abundant. The endangered tree species, Hildegardia populifolia is abundantly present having large bole in few of them.

The common herbs observed in and around the dolmens and rock shelters of the study area include: Parthenium hysterophorus (prevalent weed), Cyperus rotundus, Cymbopogon sp. (Lemon grass), Corchorus sp, Achyranthes aspera, Cardiospermum halicacabum, Cissus quadrangularis, Commelina benghalensis, Didymocarpus tomentosa, Gloriosa superba, and Tephrosia purpurea. Shrubby plants such as Jatropha curcas, Lantana camara, Dodonaea viscosa, and Opuntia stricta var.dillenii, are wide spread. Dendrophthoe falcata is a parasitic shrub found sporadically in these hilly forests. Barleria longiflora known locally as “Boodichedi” is a dominant under-shrub of the hills by which the hill itself is designated as Boothikan malai. Bryophytes like Riccia sp., foliose lichens like Palmeria sp, are also common. Fox, monkey, cock, boar, deer and lizard compose some of the common fauna found in plethora in the study area.

Sum-up

Based on the field observations and inferences, the following conclusions have been culled-out. Granitic gneisses and khondalites are the two major rock types observed in dolmens, rock shelters and their environs. Even though, other basic varieties and hybrid types were available, the ancients preferred only the acidic gneisses for their rock arts. Mineralogy, intensity of weathering, erosional resistance and joint patterns of the rocks influenced the selection of site for construction of dolmen structures and rock shelters. It is interesting to note that the pedestal rocks have not been selected as rock shelters; however, stable but rolled boulders are the choice of ancients. The calcareous soils accumulated in the shelter bottoms, graphite streaks associated with khondalitic rocks and iron hydroxide might be the inorganic chemical source for making rock pictures. In addition, probably the organic dye extracted from the rich botanical bounties could be the base for making the rock paintings. The hard, massive and rugged edges of broken dolerite rock pieces with hackly edges were the hunting tools of ancients. The source materials for the manufacture of large scale gray ware collected from the Neolithic excavation sites are unequivocally the soil derivatives of khondalites only. Hence, the ancient pottery might have been indigenous and in-situ. Thus, it is concluded that the geo-bio environment of these areas have played considerable and significant role in the culture of the past.

The archaeological evidences of the present study suggest that the Microlithic people who lived in rock shelters would have slowly moved to the Neolithic stage and later crawled towards rudimentary agriculture. A systematic and complete excavation of a habitation-cum-burial site assisted by scientific dating of different types of habitation and burials is imperative for further progress in establishing the hidden facts of the rock art study.

Chapter-3

METHODOLOGY OF DOCUMENTATION

Chapter-3

METHODOLOGY OF DOCUMENTATION

The rock art spatially, contextually and chronologically covers a wider spectrum from Neolithic times to Early Historic times. In view of the significance of the rock art and nature of the narrative themes of the paintings, a multi-disciplinary team comprising of archaeologists, geologists, anthropologists, art historians and chemists were constituted (Figs. 3.1-3.2). In addition, videographers, photographers and 3D-scanner experts were also involved (Fig. 3.3-3.4). A team of ten carried out field work to describe and document the paintings from different perspectives, and the outcome is the result of team effort. As visual and digital documentation was the primary aim of the rock art investigations, the field work was designed to overcome natural hindrances, such as avoiding rainy seasons and animal conflicts. Rock shelters located in the Eastern Ghats are relatively at lower elevations from ground level, whereas the shelters in the Western Ghats are mostly located at higher elevations. This situation entailed additional measures to effectively document the rock art such as at Thondamanur, Kodanthur, Sirumalai, etc... On the technical side, an Artec Eva 3-D scanner was deployed for documentation (Figs. 3.4). This high-resolution scanner can capture images that are not visible to the naked eye.

Fig. 3.1 Team members

Fig. 3.2 Team members

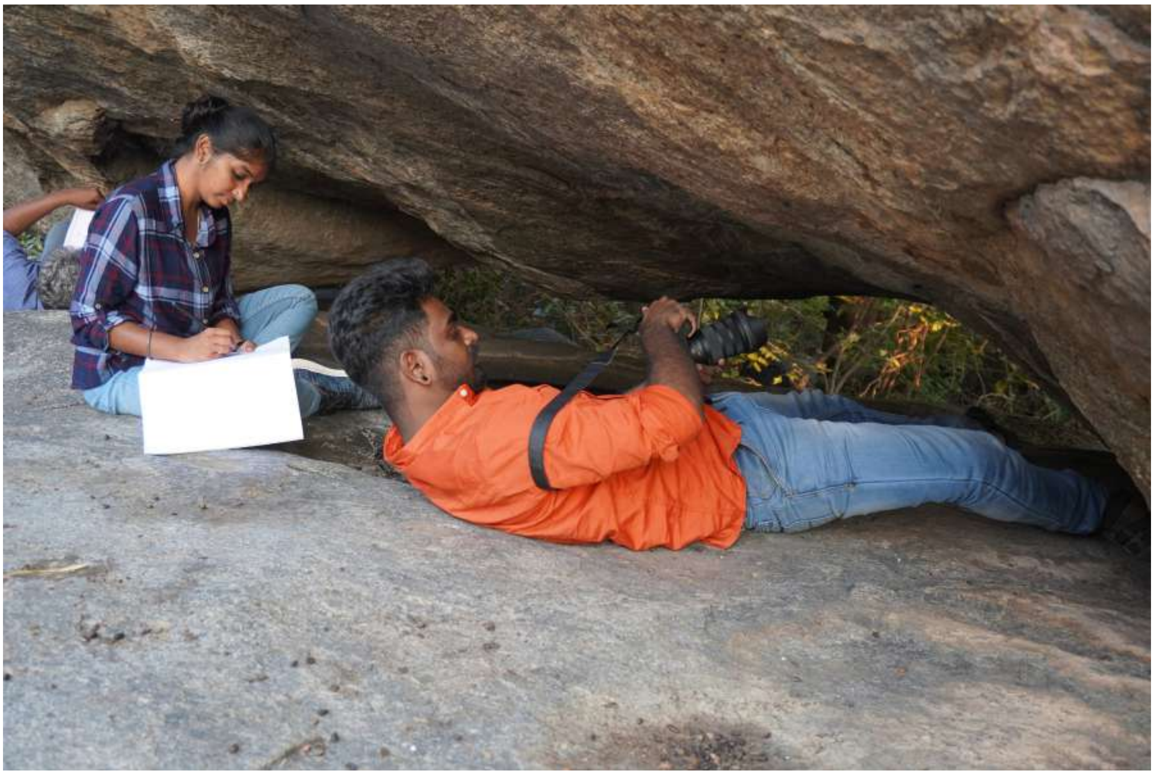


Fig. 3.3 Documentation in progress

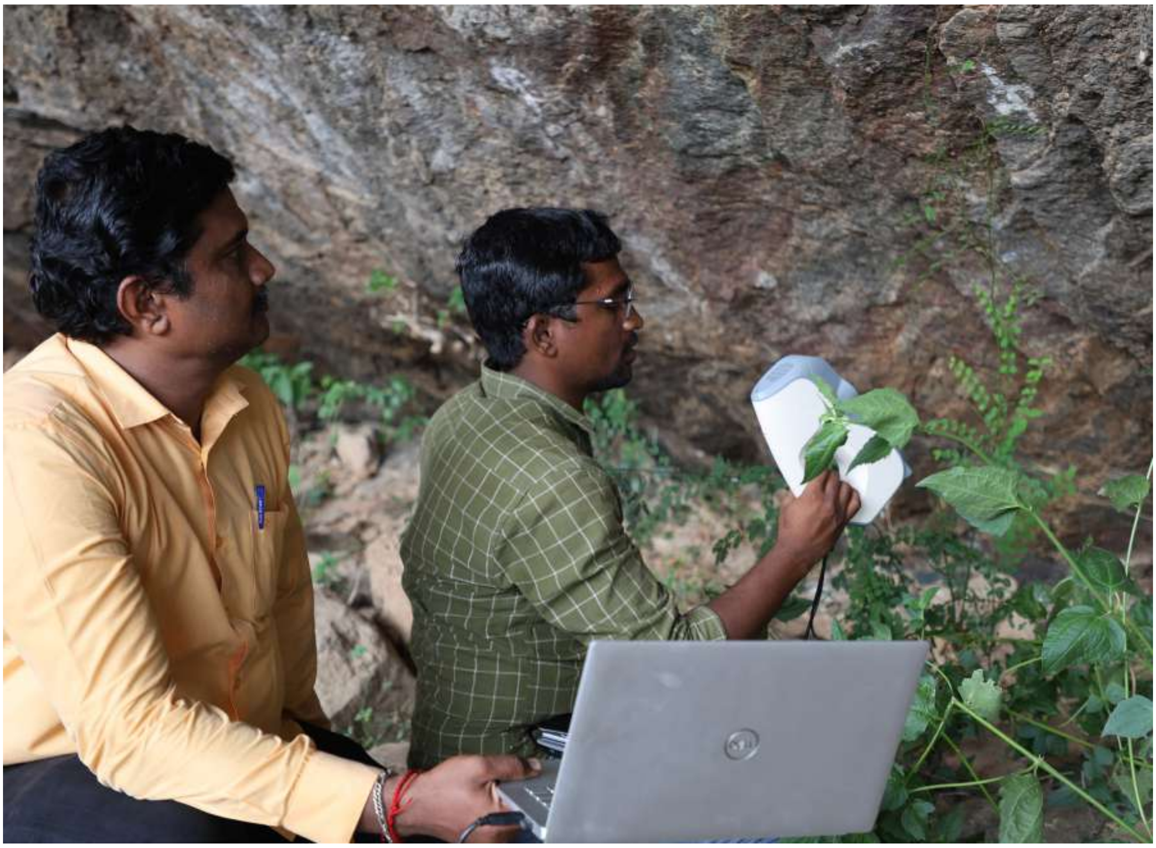


Fig. 3.4 Documentation with 3D Scanner

As the paintings were executed on a wider canvas, it was necessary to visualize the entire paintings in a single frame. This difficulty was experienced while documenting the entire paintings either in a video or with a still camera as we noticed several clusters of paintings expressing different themes from different periods. Therefore, the entire canvas was divided into different workable sections/zones. Each section/zone was divided vertically and horizontally into various columns and rows to create a grid. For instance, each column (A for example) is further sub-divided into rows and numbered as A1, A2, A3 and so on from top to bottom. The width and height of each column and row were decided depending on the nature of the narratives. In general, each grid covers an area of about one square meter (A1). The total length of the column from top to bottom consisted of several grids depending upon the availability of the imagery in a column. In general, it covers about 1 metre in height and approximately 1 metre in width. Thus, the entire surface of the rock-shelter with paintings was divided into convenient squares or grids. Each team member was requested to document the imageries as per the numbered grid and to express their view. For instance, the snap of the entire column (A) is covered first and then each grid of the column from top to bottom (A1 to A4 for instance) is documented, so that minute details of each grid are documented. The closer view of each grid helps us to identify over-lapping phases and faded paintings. The still photographer was expected to cover the paintings on either side of the grid (Fig. 3.3). These over-lapping images helped to prepare the photo mosaics of the multiple columns or rows or entire sections/zones.

In the same manner, the art historian was requested to draw each grid by overlaying a tracing sheet directly on the painting and drawing as it is (Figs. 3.5). Following this, all the team members described the paintings grid-wise so that they could be compared with the drawings and photo-images. Whenever there were superimpositions, the art historian numbered the layers chronologically. The earliest painting was numbered as layer-1 and the subsequent super-positions were numbered as layers 2, 3 and so on. Further, the colour variations were also marked by the art historian.

The entire episode of the rock paintings was digitally drawn with the help of AutoCAD directly from the images. This helped visualize the super-positions and the variations in colour. Both the images and corresponding drawings were provided in the panel descriptions. DStretch software was used to enhance images and the visibility of photo images. In the case of engravings, grid-wise estampages were taken and a mosaic was prepared to get the complete picture (Fig. 3.6).

Though there are many advantages in this methodology adopted for documentation, there is an inherent problem with it. One such problem is the documentation of theme-based clusters covering more than one column or grid. To overcome this problem, it was decided to cover each cluster individually. Accordingly, the columns and grids that cover a theme or cluster were documented separately. This methodology addressed the anticipated deficiencies to some extent.

The views expressed by the scholars from different disciplines were consolidated to get a complete picture of the nature of the paintings. To understand the site-settings in the given geological, geomorphological, ecological and cultural contexts, the paintings encountered in the vicinity of the present site were reported. An ethno-archaeological study was also carried out to identify the creators of the paintings.

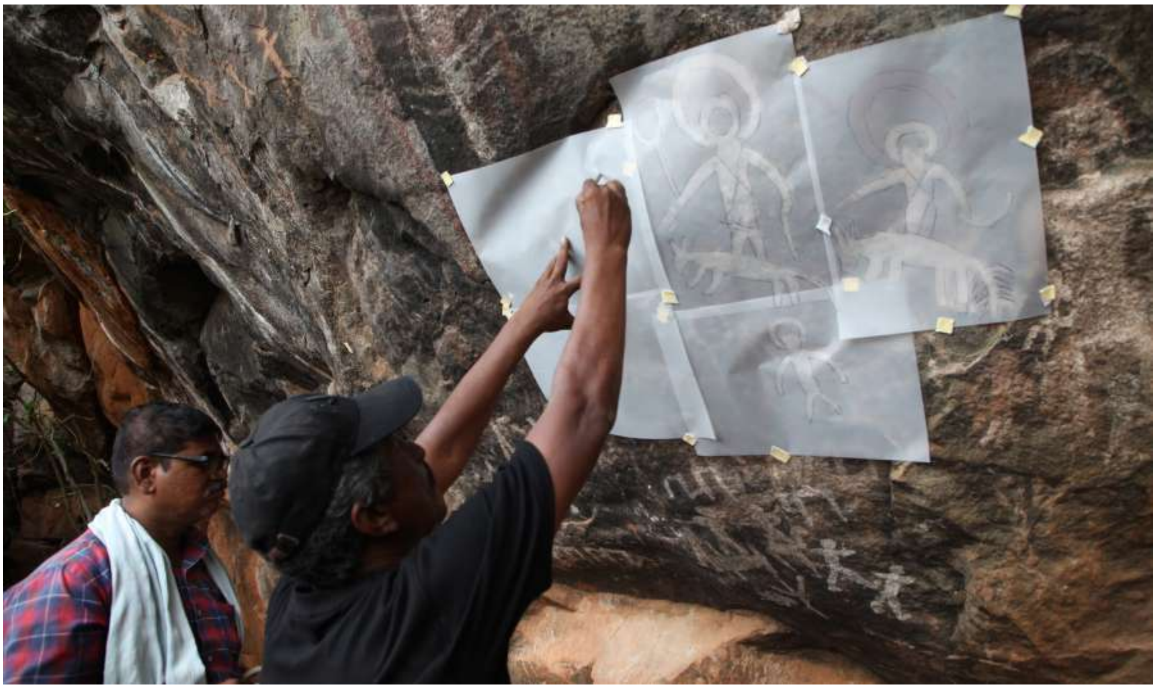


Fig. 3.5 Tracing the rock art

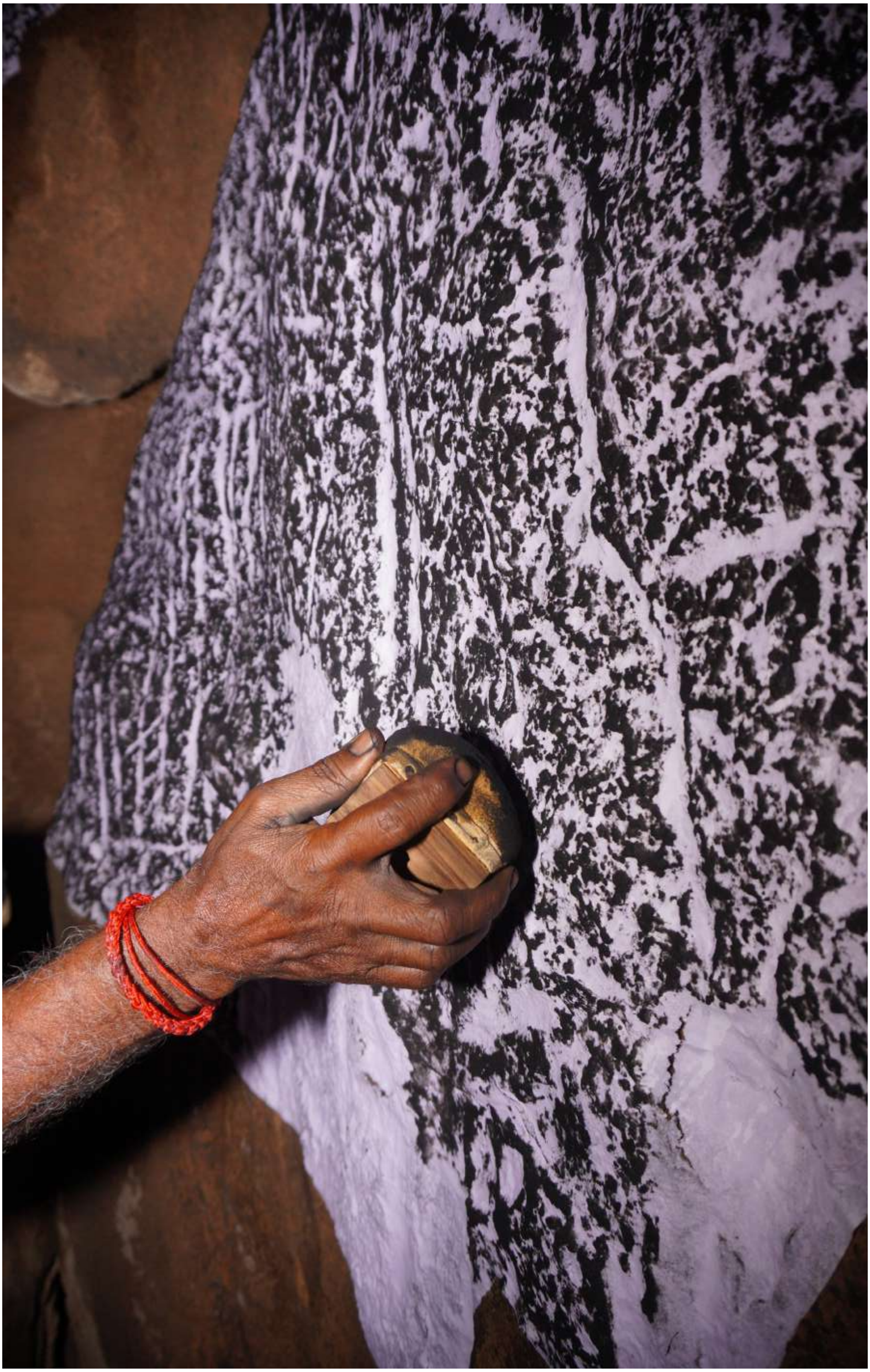


Fig. 3.6 Taking estampages of the petroglyph

Chapter 4

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

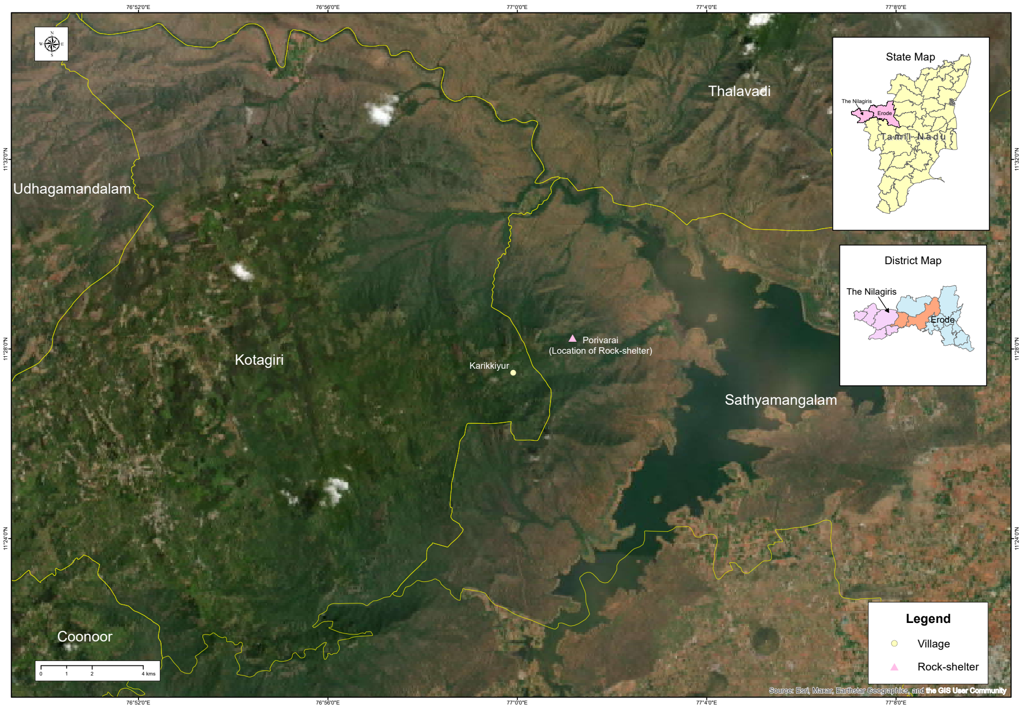
Chapter 4

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

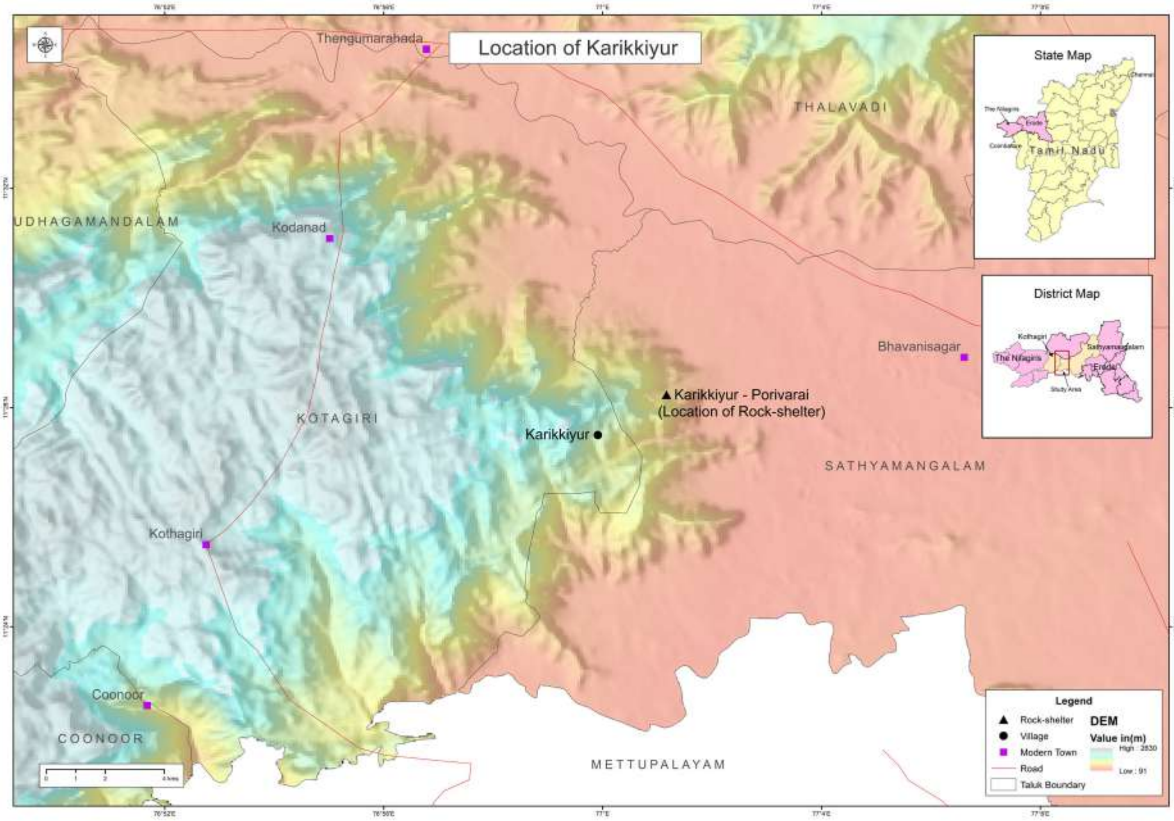
Nilgiris District

4.1 Karikkiyur

The village Karikkiyur (Karikkiyur), also called as Karikkaiyur, is located (11.45829 N; 76.998568 E; AMSL 1184 m) in Sathyamangalam taluk of Erode district, Tamil Nadu. The site is close to Sathyamangalam when one approaches from the confluence of the Mayar and Bhavani rivers, but it is inaccessible today due to the construction of the Bhavani Sagar dam. The site overlooks the Bhavani Sagar dam. The river Mayar flows behind the site on its northern side. A small rivulet called *telinir-odai* flows in front of the rock-shelter. The site could be approached from Kothagiri, a major town in Nilgiri district, after crossing Solurmattam and then to Karikkiyur. The village Solurmattam is located about 18 km from Kothagiri and the village Karikkiyur lies 12 km from Solurmattam. The rock art site locally called Porivarai (11.47055 N; 77.01944 E; AMSL 1051 m) is located about 3–4 km from Karikkiyur (Maps 4.1.1 and 4.1.2). *Pori* means engraving/painting and *varai* means drawing probably named after the paintings executed on the surface of the rock shelter (Fig. 4.1.1). A jungle path infested with wild animals leads to the site. The site was first discovered by G. Chandrasekakaran and K.T.Gandhirajan in 2004 (Sridhar 2005:35-36).


76°52'0"E
76°56'0"E
77°0'0"E
77°4'0"E
77°8'0"E
11°32'0"N
11°28'0"N
11°24'0"N
N
W
E
S
Thalavadi
Udhagamandalam
Kotagiri
Karikkiyur
Porivarai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Sathyamangalam
Coonoor
State Map
The Nilagiris
Erode
Tamil Nadu
District Map
The Nilagiris
Erode
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
0
1
2
4 kms
Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Map 4.1.1 Location of Karikkiyur


Location of Karikkiyur
Thengumarahada
THALAVADI
UDHAGAMANDALAM
Kodanad
KOTAGIRI
Karikkiyur
▲ Karikkiyur - Porivarai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Bhavanisagar
SATHYAMANGALAM
Kothagiri
Coonoor
COONOOR
METTUPALAYAM
State Map
The Nilagiris
Erode
Coimbatore
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Kothagiri
The Nilagiris
Sathyamangalam
Erode
Study Area
Legend
▲ Rock-shelter
● Village
■ Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 2630
Low : 91

Map 4.1.2 Location of Karikkiyur

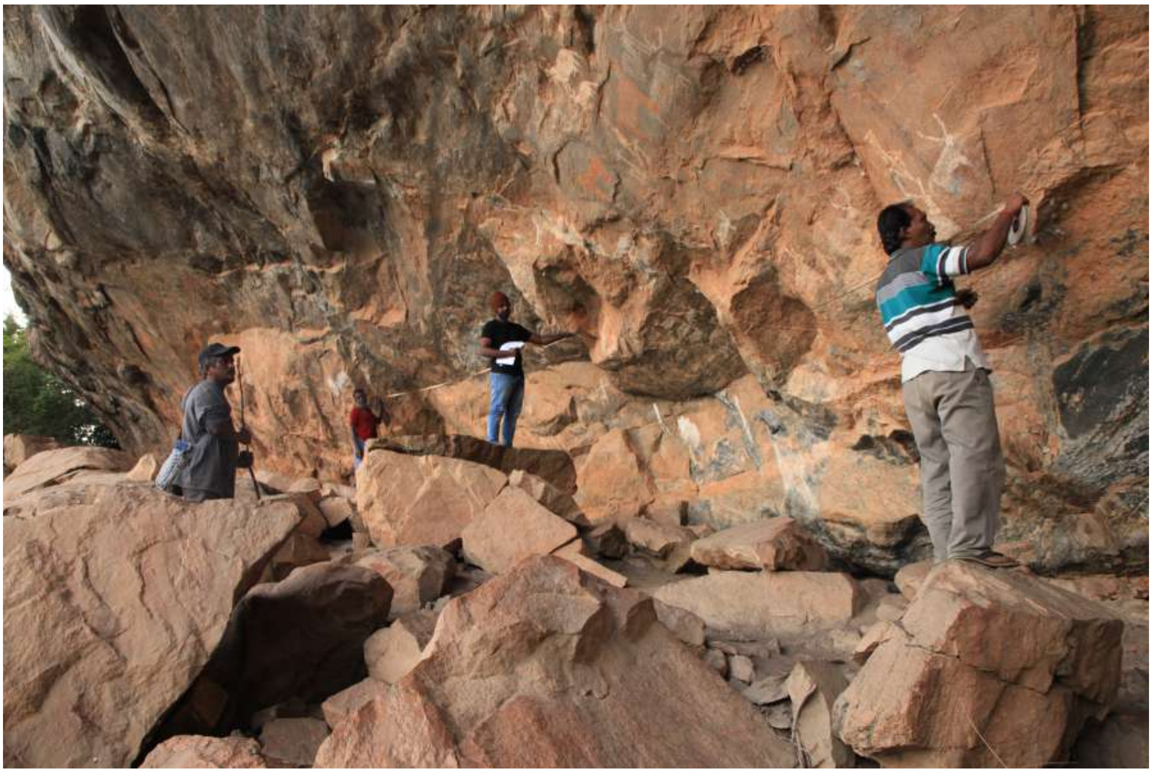


Fig. 4.1.1 Karikkiyur: General view of the rock-shelter

Site Settings

The site *Porivarai*, the painted rock-shelter, is dated to the Iron Age based on the dolmenoid cists found in the vicinity. A group of dolmenoid cists, locally called *pandavar vidu*, is found on the opposite hillock called *koli-kodu*.

Rock-shelter (porivarai)

The total length and height of the shelter are 150 m and 90 m respectively (Fig. 4.1.2). The paintings are executed on the east-facing surface measuring 53 m East-West and 15 m from top to bottom.

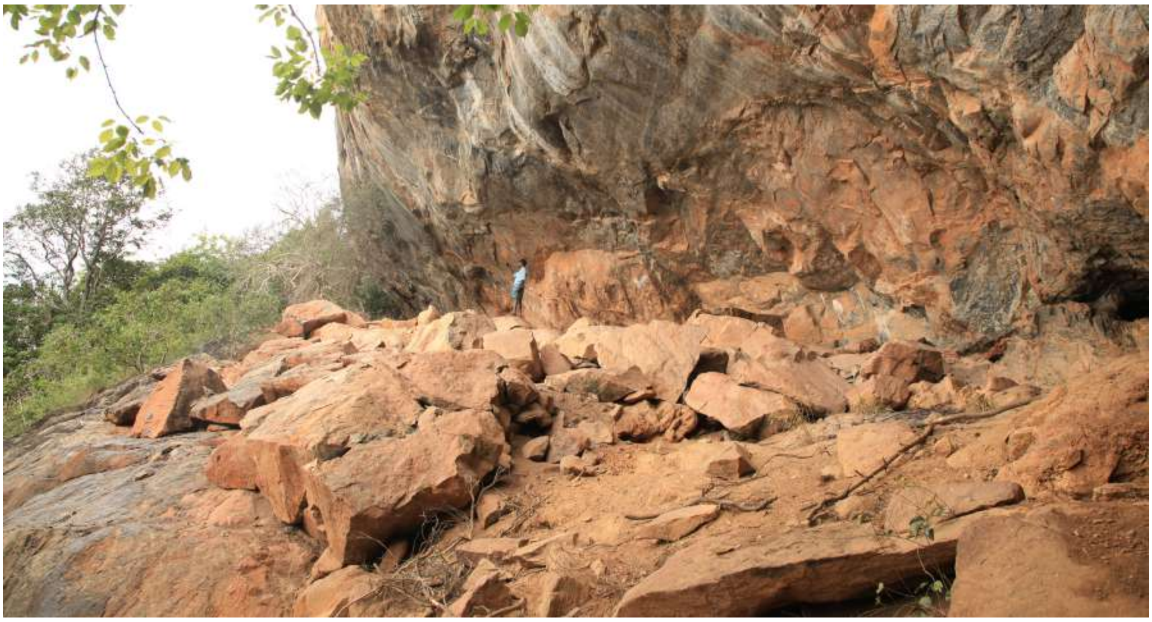


Fig. 4.1.2 Karikkiyur: General view of the rock-shelter

Fig. 4.1.3 Team Members

Description

The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of hunting scenes, cattle Riders, nature, celebration after successful hunting, get-together, dancing figures, animal hunting, a herd, war-like scene, etc.,

Panel Description

The hunting scene is depicted in red and white colours (Zone-1: Cluster-1). Two human figures are shown in a hunting posture. There are two animal figures. The right one looks like a tiger having a linear body, a long curved tail and a small face with ears. Another is a big sized animal, probably a deer. A kind of tree with branches is also depicted (Figs.4.1.4a and 4.1.4b).

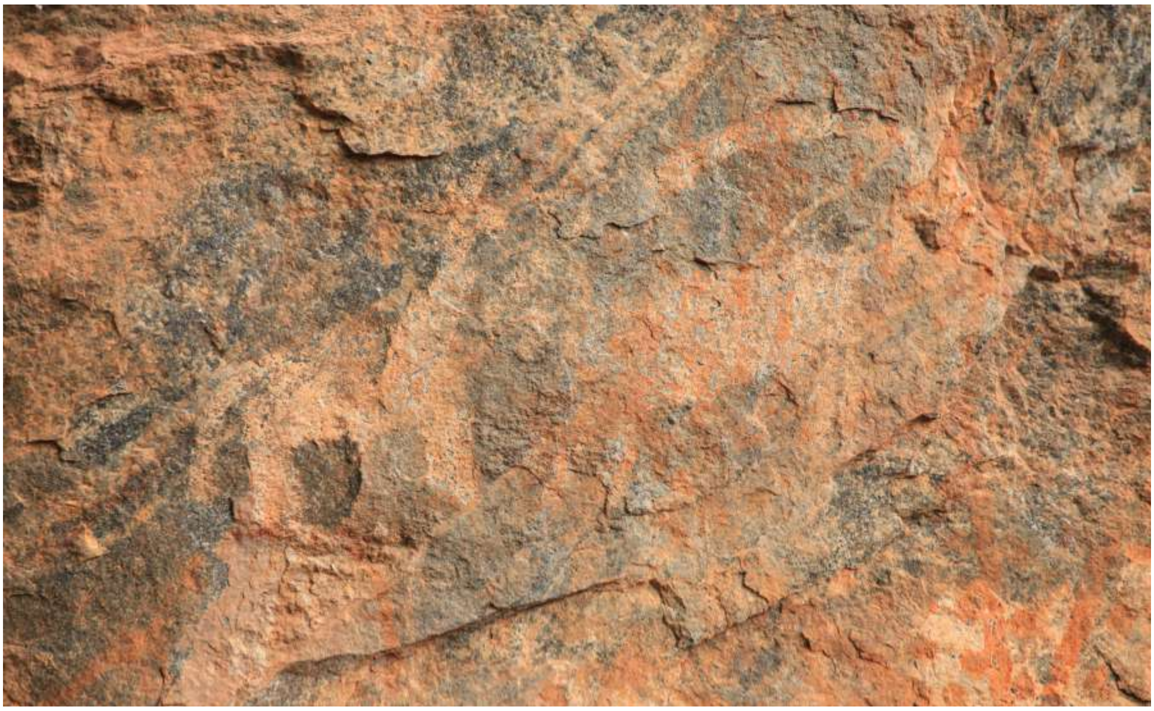


Fig. 4.1.4a Hunting Scene

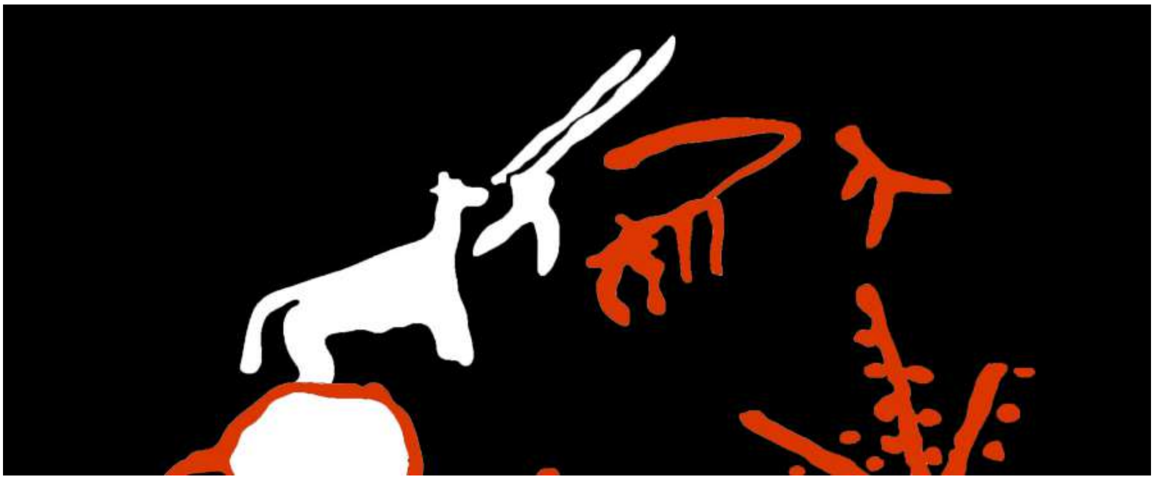


Fig. 4.1.4b Hunting Scene

The tree is depicted in red (Zone-1: Cluster-2). The upper portion of the tree has dots from the middle to top along the branches, which might be an indication of flower buds or leaves. Close to the tree, a faded image of a standing human is also seen (Fig.4.1.5a).

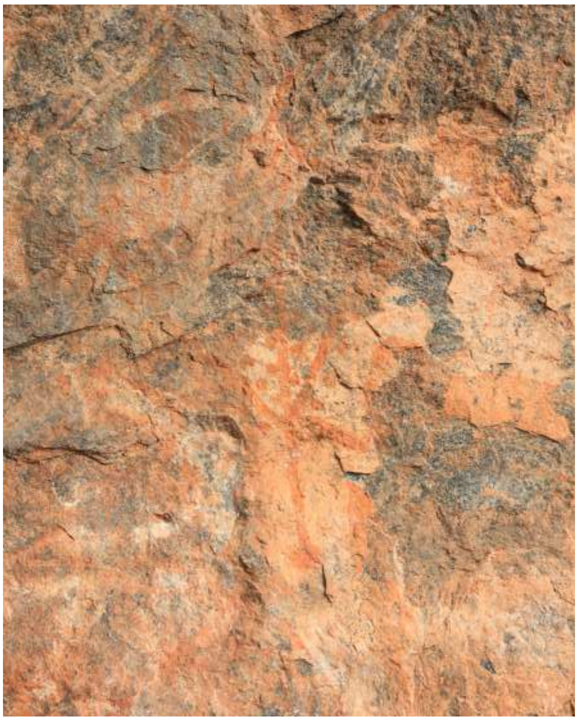


Fig. 4.1.5a Tree

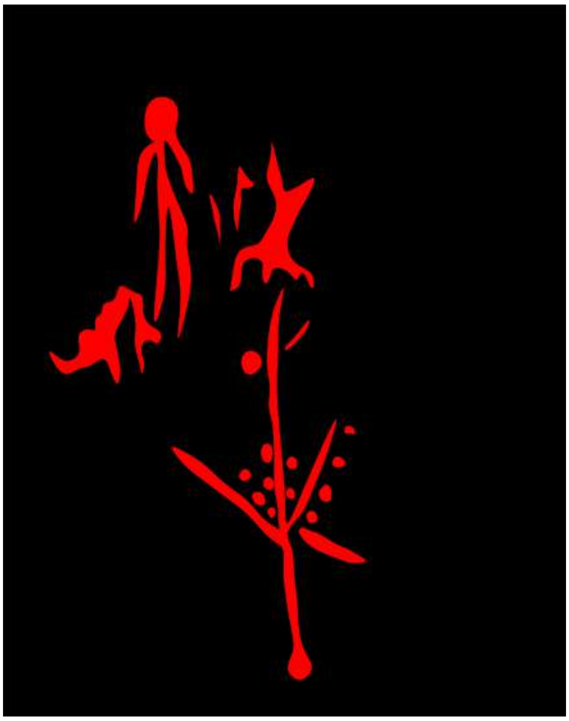


Fig. 4.1.5b Tree

An animal is depicted in ochre (Zone-1: Cluster-3). The dynamic nature of the animal is shown by its moving legs. The animal has an elongated body with short legs and a tail (Figs.4.1.6a and 4.1.6b).

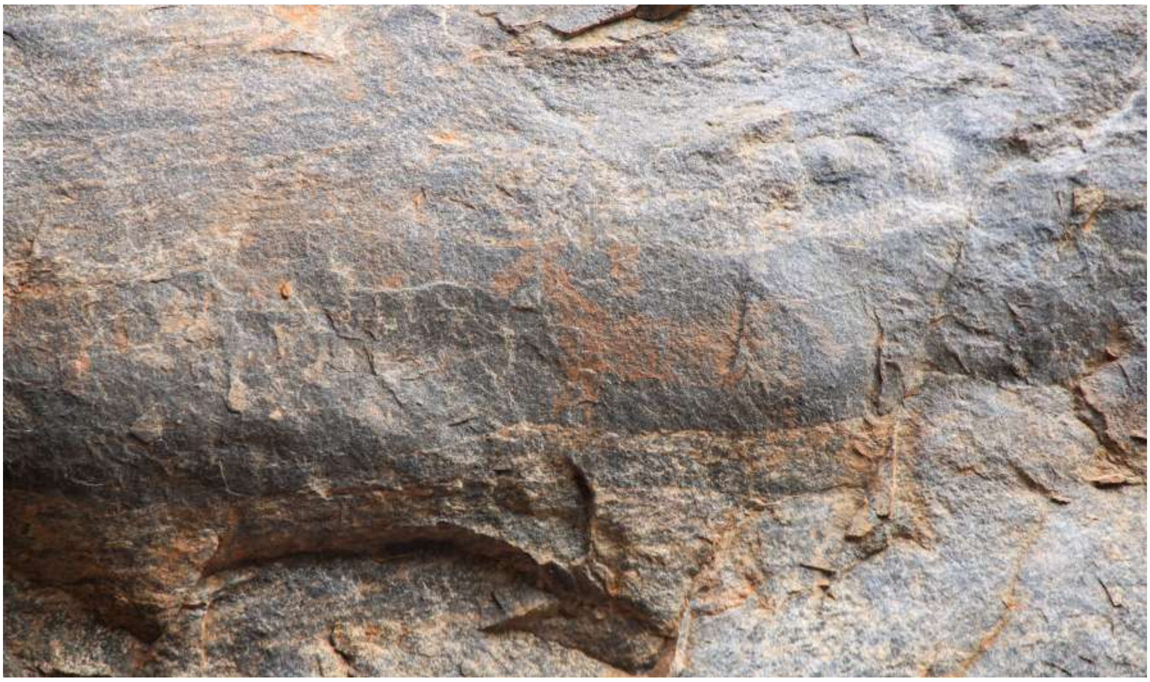


Fig. 4.1.6a A rider

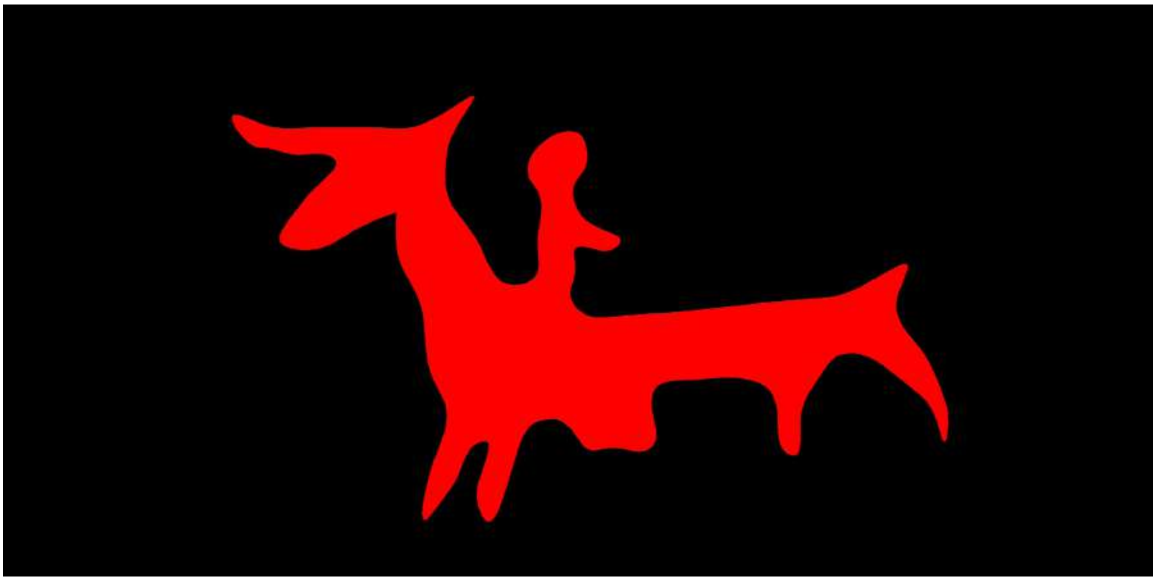


Fig. 4.1.6b A rider

A group of three animals in standing posture are depicted in white (Zone-1: Cluster-4). Captivatingly, one of the animals is shown feeding a calf (Figs.4.1.7a and 4.1.7b).

Fig. 4.1.7a A group of animals

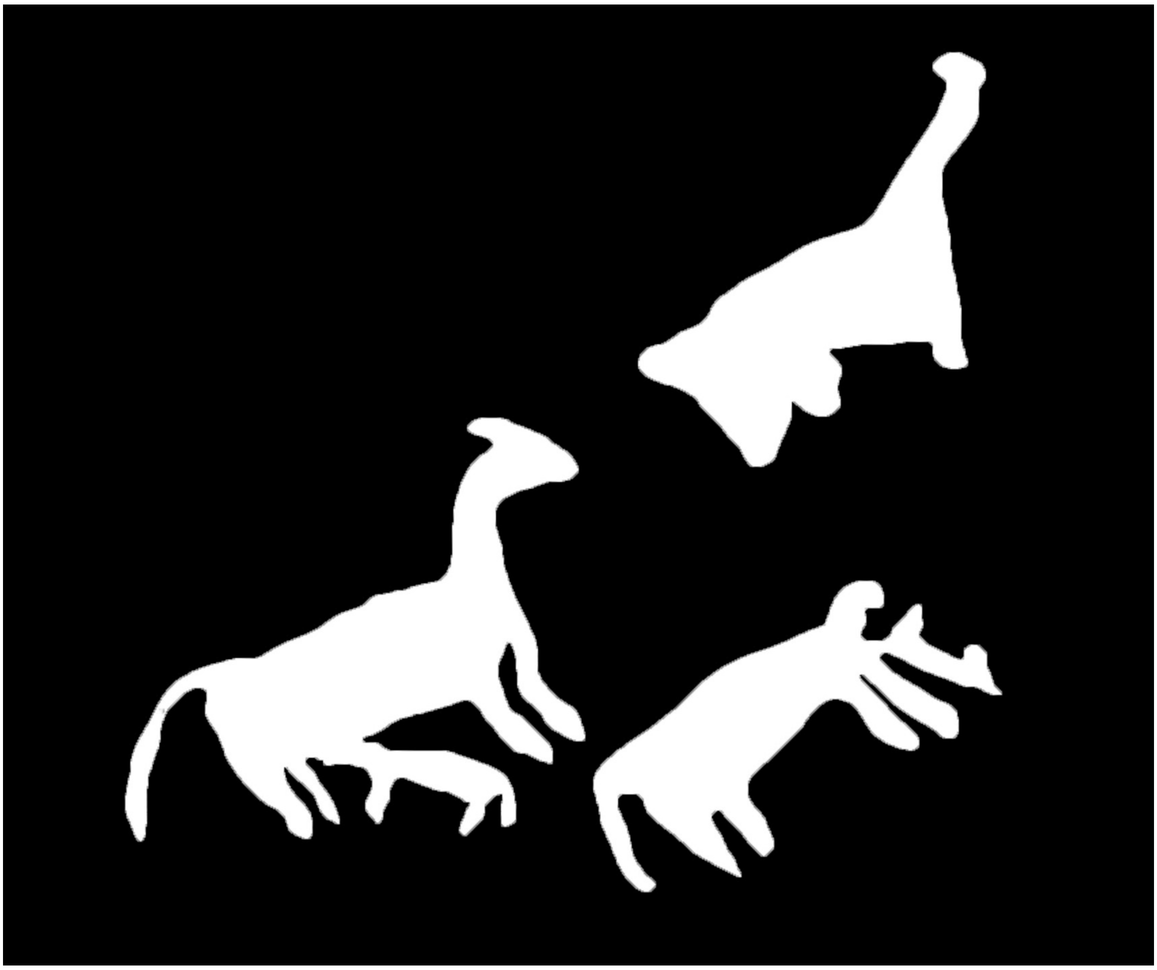


Fig. 4.1.7b A group of animals

Human figures, probably hunters, are shown in standing posture holding a weapon close to animals (Zone-1: Cluster-5). Two hunters are mounted on a standing animal and another hunter is standing between. Three of them are holding a sword-like weapon in their right hand and the left hand is resting on their hip (Figs.4.1.8a and 4.1.8b).

Fig. 4.1.8a Hunters

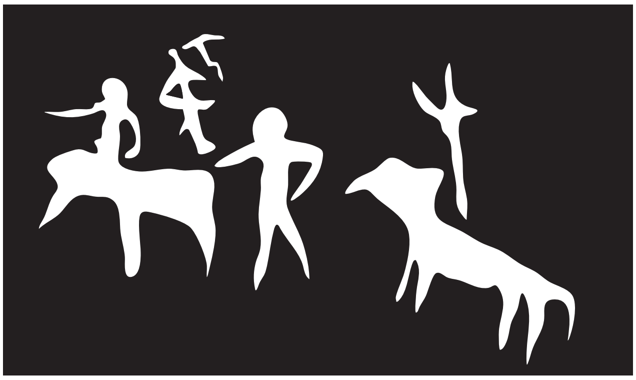


Fig. 4.1.8b Hunters

A group of three deers in white are shown (Zone-1: Cluster-6). The deer is depicted with an elongated body and dendritic horns (Figs.4.1.9a and 4.1.9b).

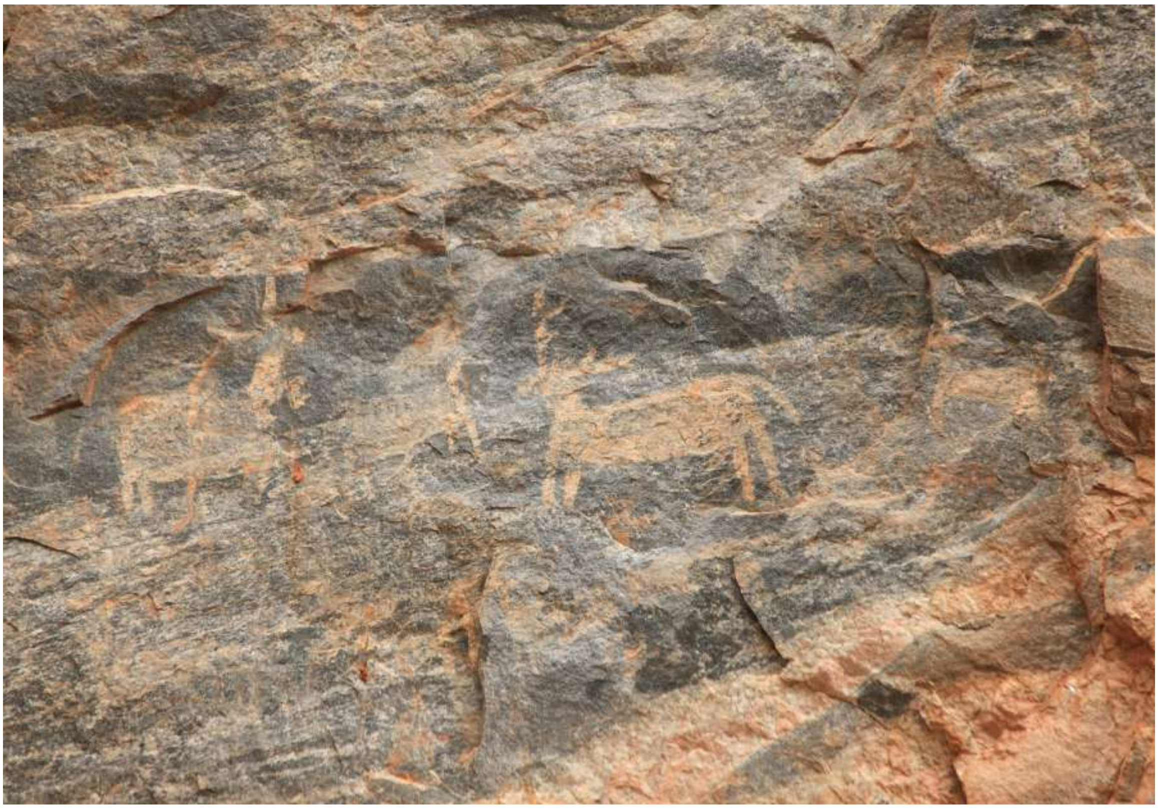


Fig. 4.1.9a A group of animals

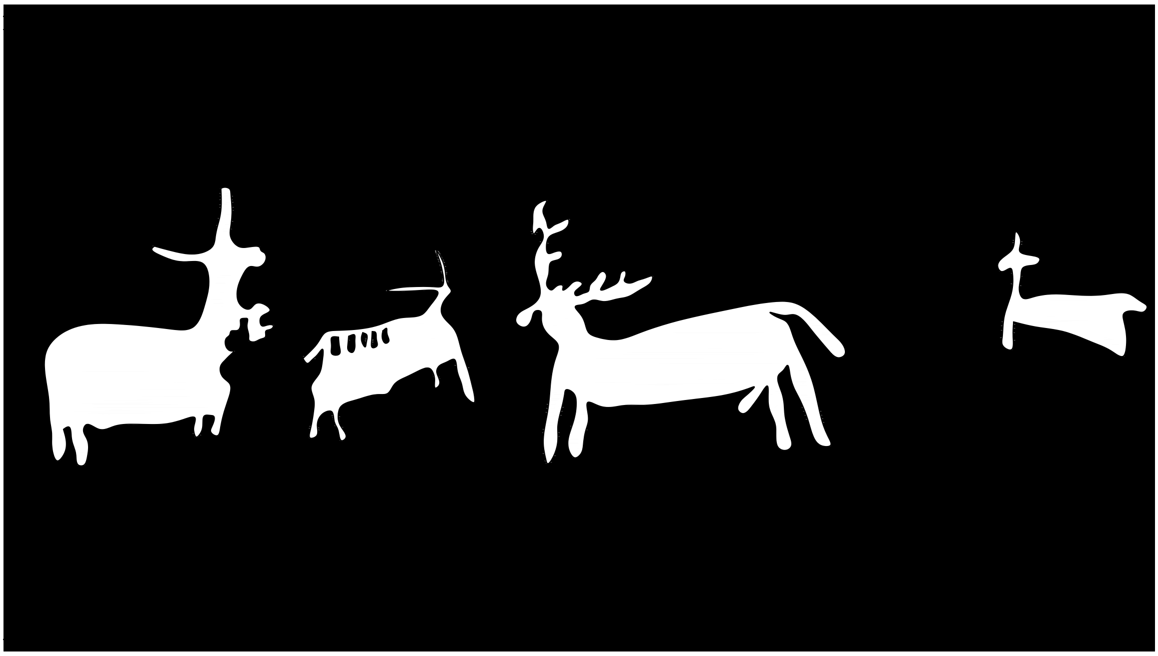


Fig. 4.1.9b A group of animals

Hunters are depicted in white (Zone-2: Cluster-1). A Group of people numbering 14 are gathered at a place along with 4 horses. Among the 14, four of them are mounted on a horse each holding a sword and a shield. Around the horse riders, a group of 10 soldiers holding a sword and a shield is depicted (Figs.4.1.10a and 4.1.10b).

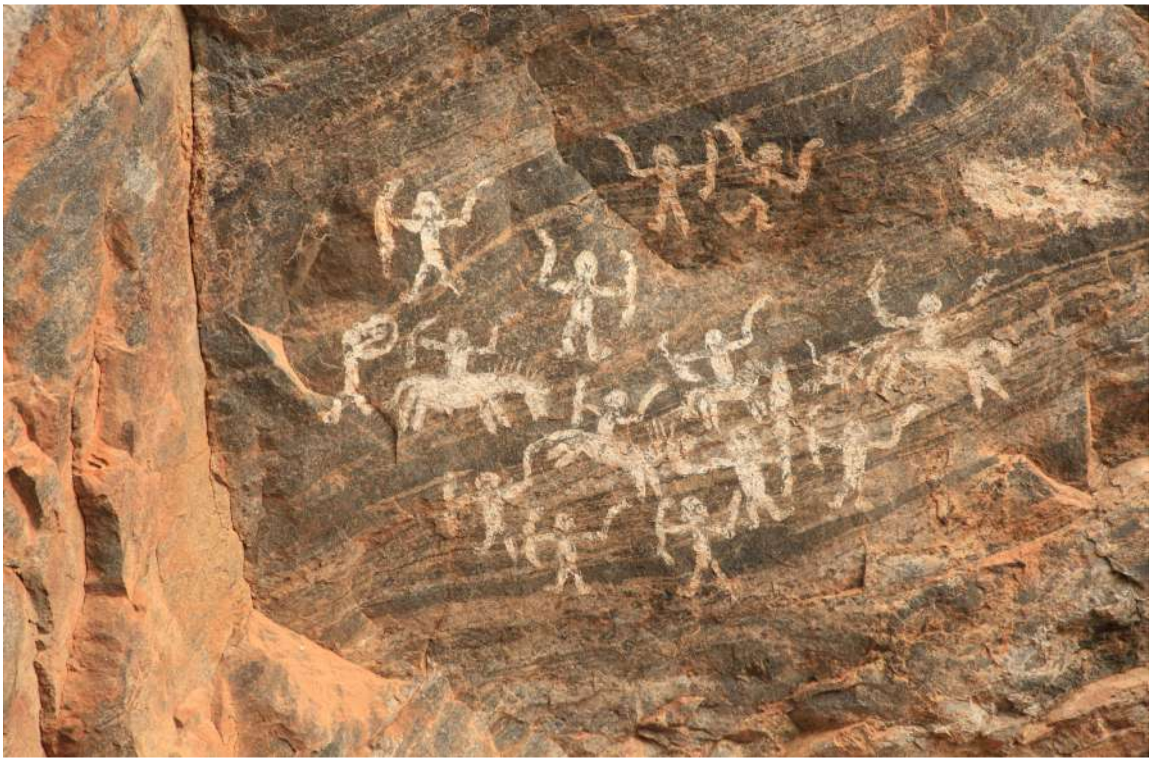


Fig. 4.1.10a Hunters

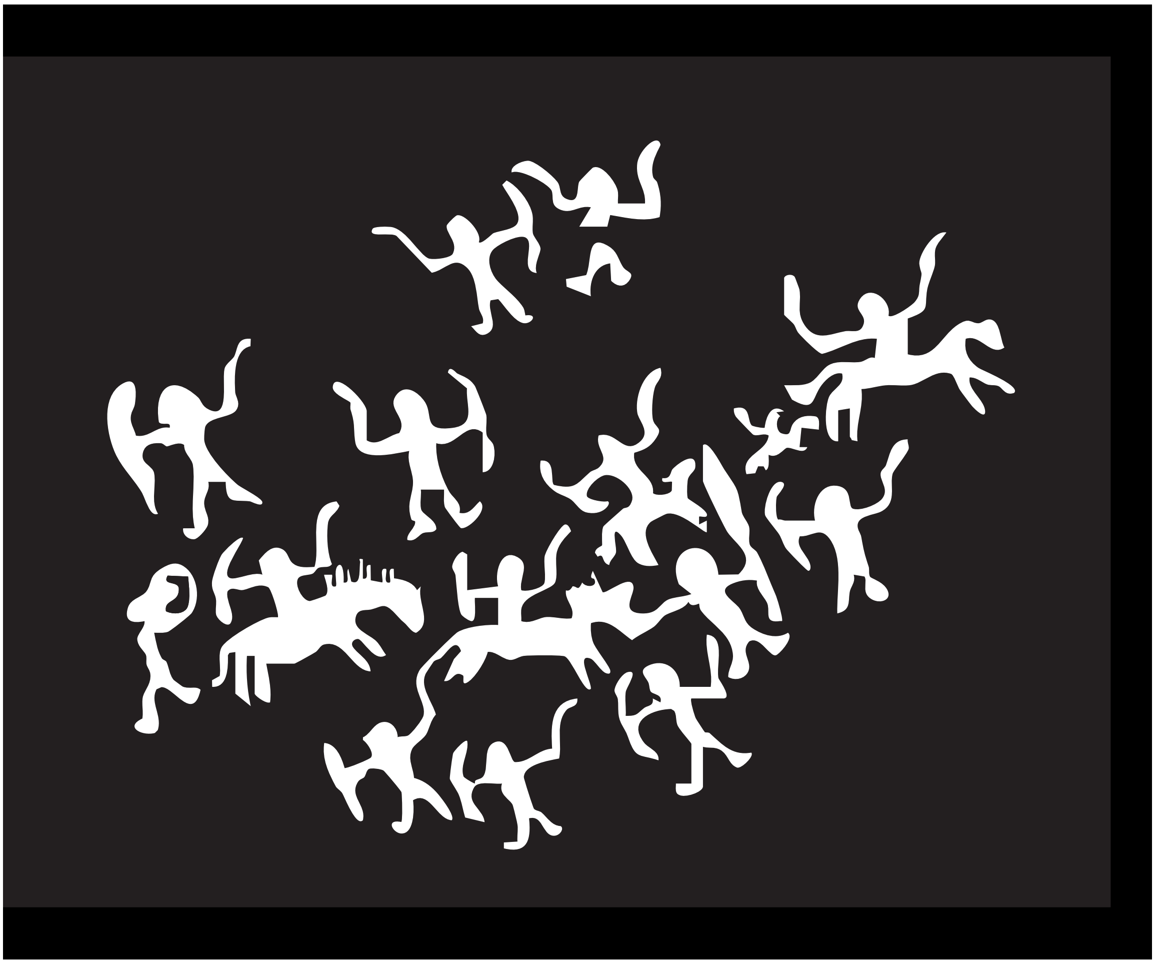


Fig. 4.1.10b Hunters

All are facing unidirectional and moving towards the right suggesting they belong to one group.

Three humans were shown seated on animals holding swords and shields. Two of them are shown facing each other mounted on a horse. A man mounted on an elephant is shown moving away from the group. Besides, an animal and a man standing in an akimbo posture are depicted. A man and an animal facing in opposite directions are also depicted (Figs.4.1.11a and 4.1.11b).

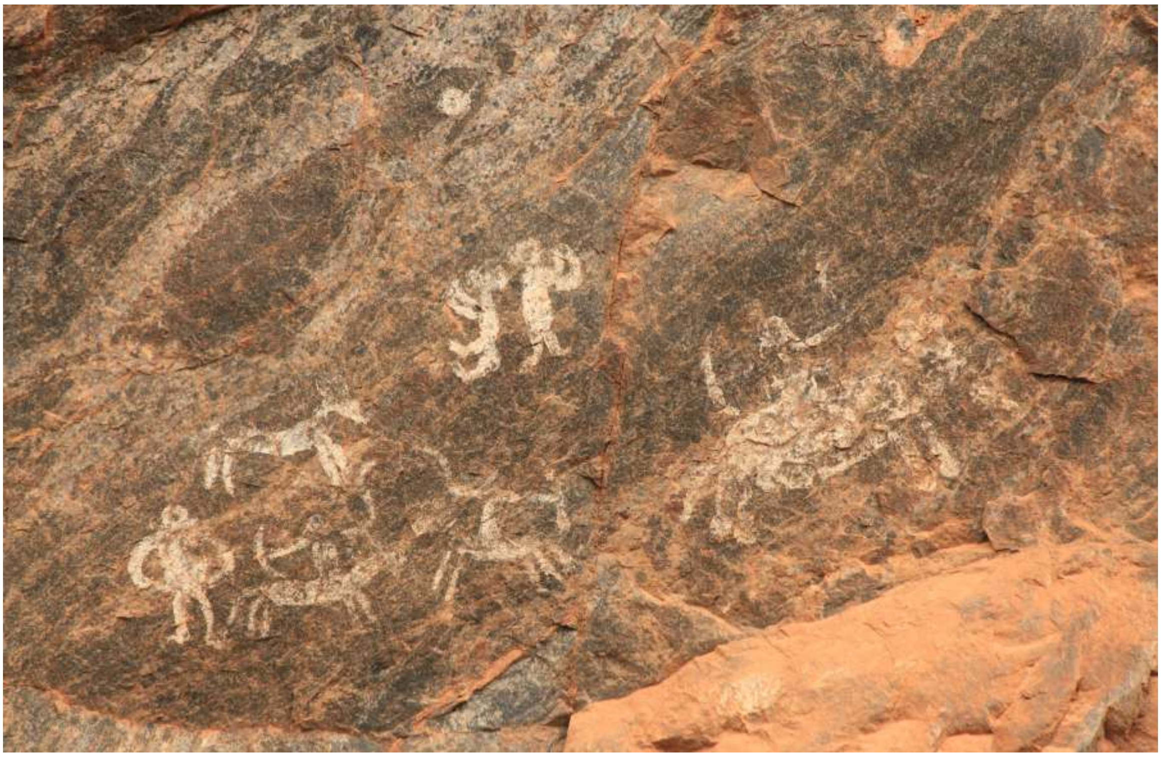


Fig. 4.1.11a Hunters

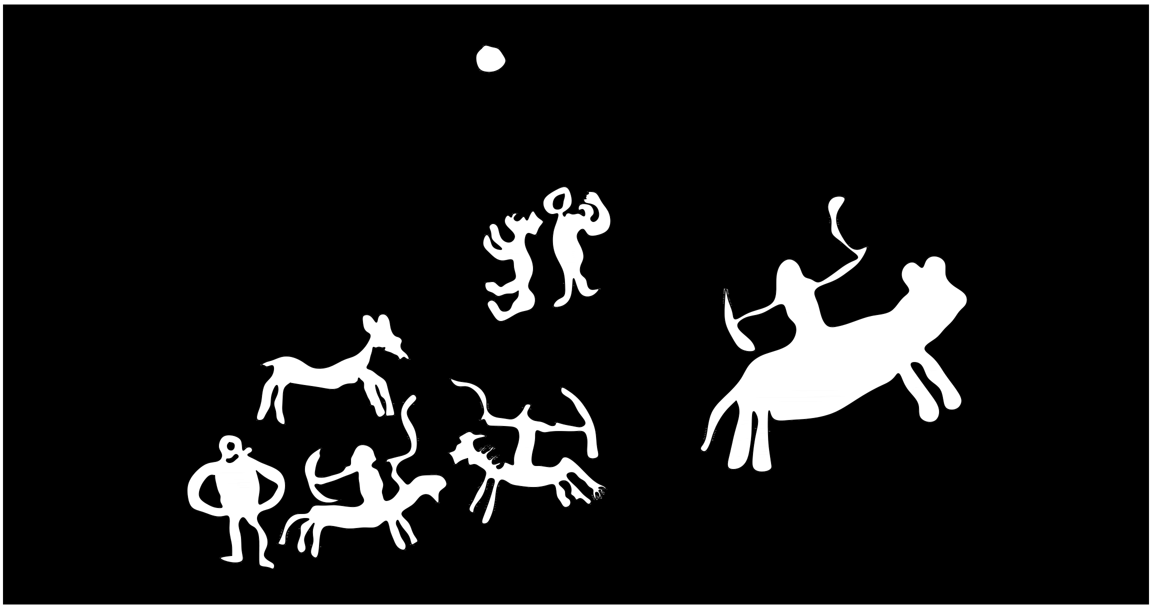


Fig. 4.1.11b Hunters

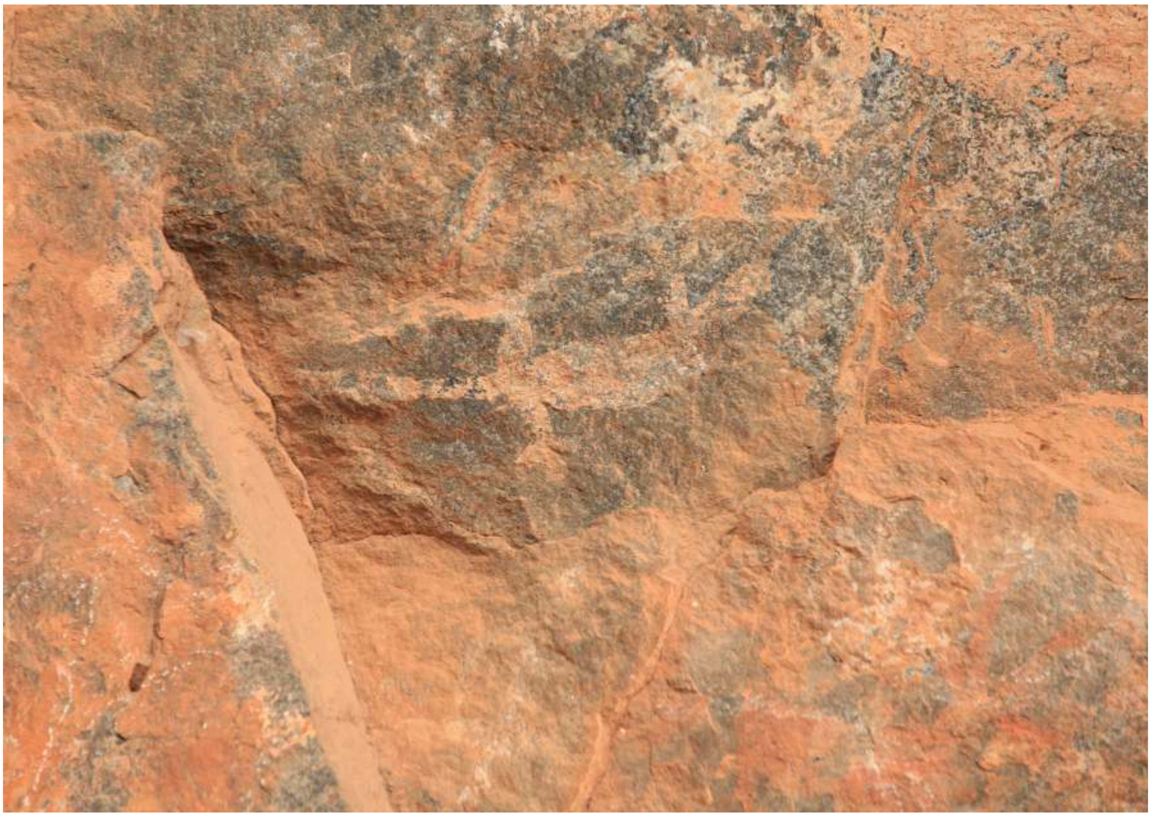


Fig. 4.1.12a A lizard

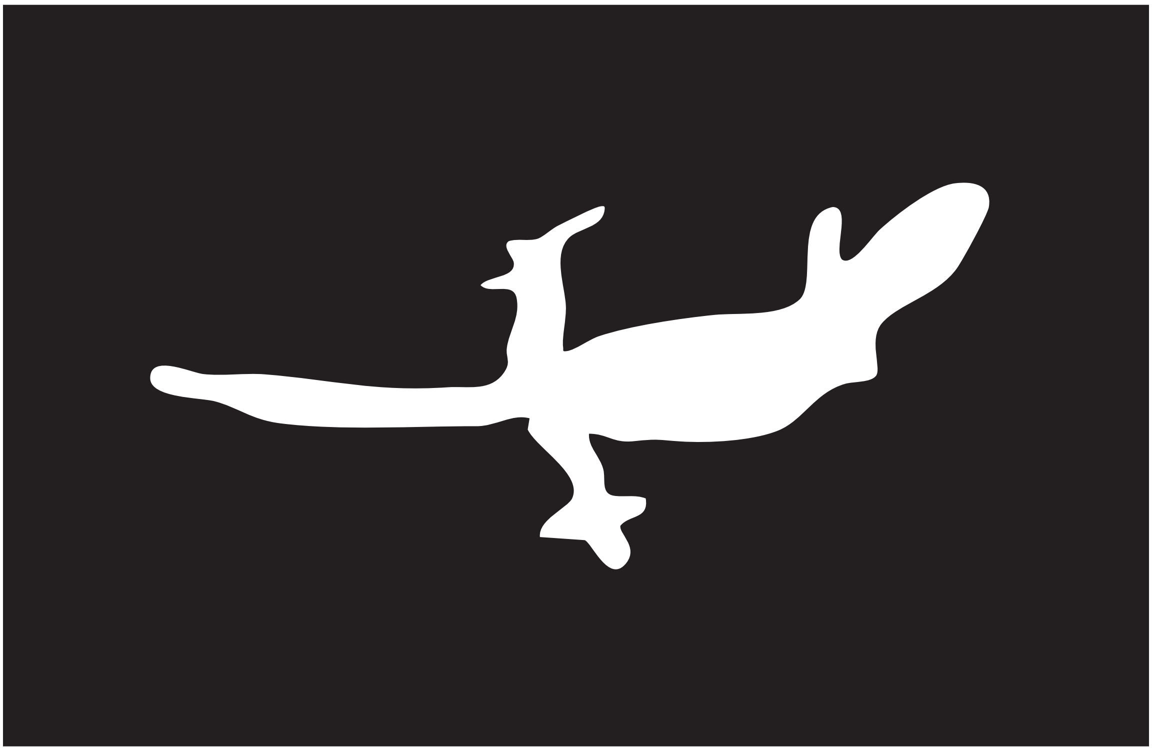


Fig. 4.1.12b A lizard

A lizard having a long body, short legs and a long tail is depicted in white colour (Zone-2: Cluster-3) (Figs.4.1.12a and 4.1.12b).

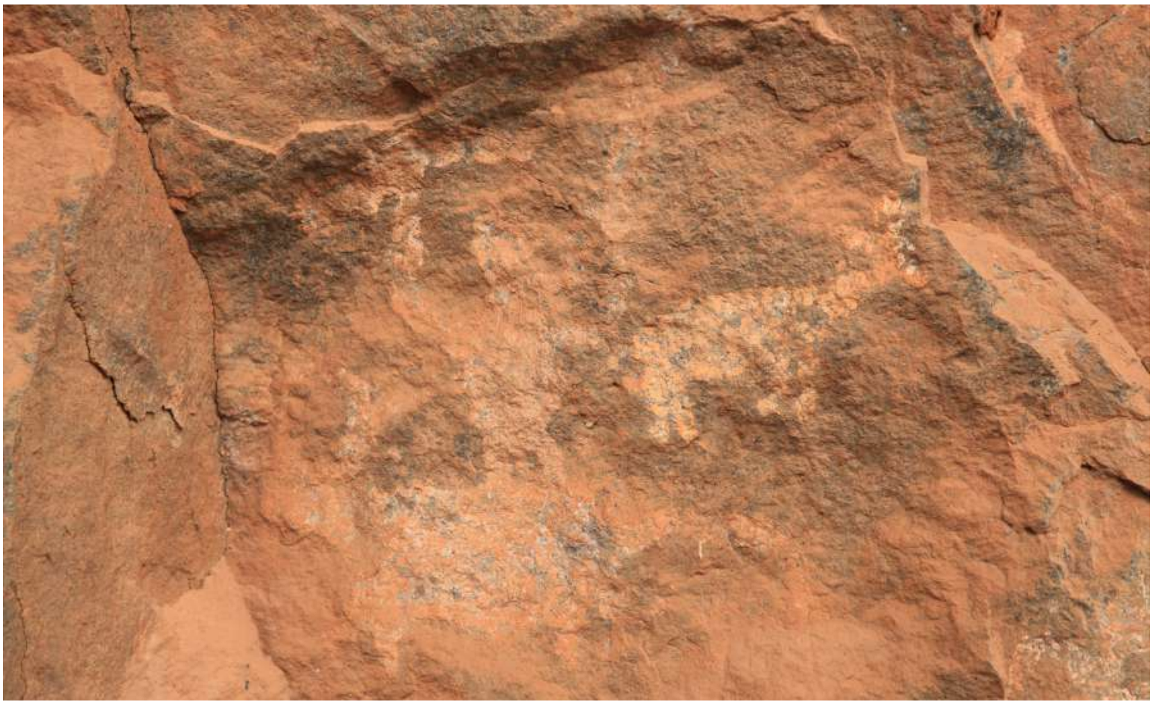


Fig. 4.1.13a Hunting scene

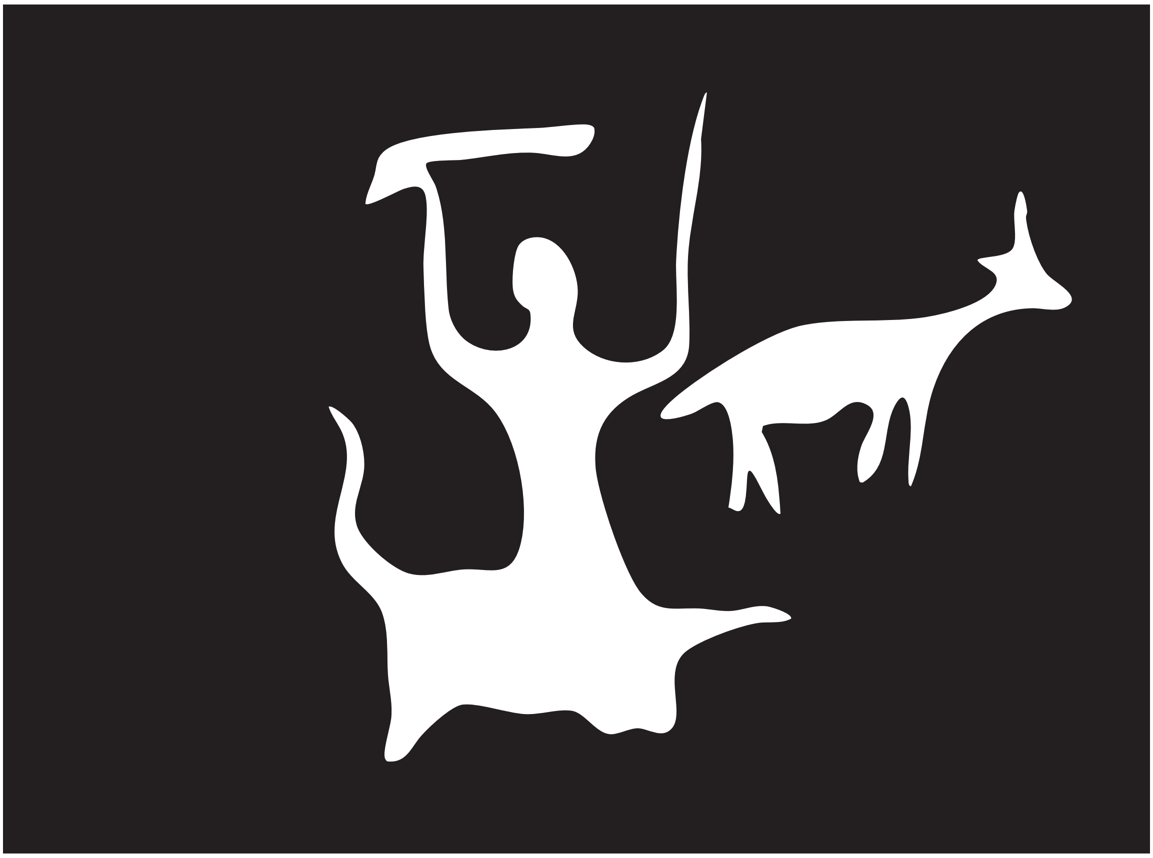


Fig. 4.1.13b Hunting scene

A hunting scene is depicted in white colour (Zone-2: Cluster-4). A human sitting on a faded animal holds long weapons and an animal is seen behind the man (Figs.4.1.13a and 4.1.13b).

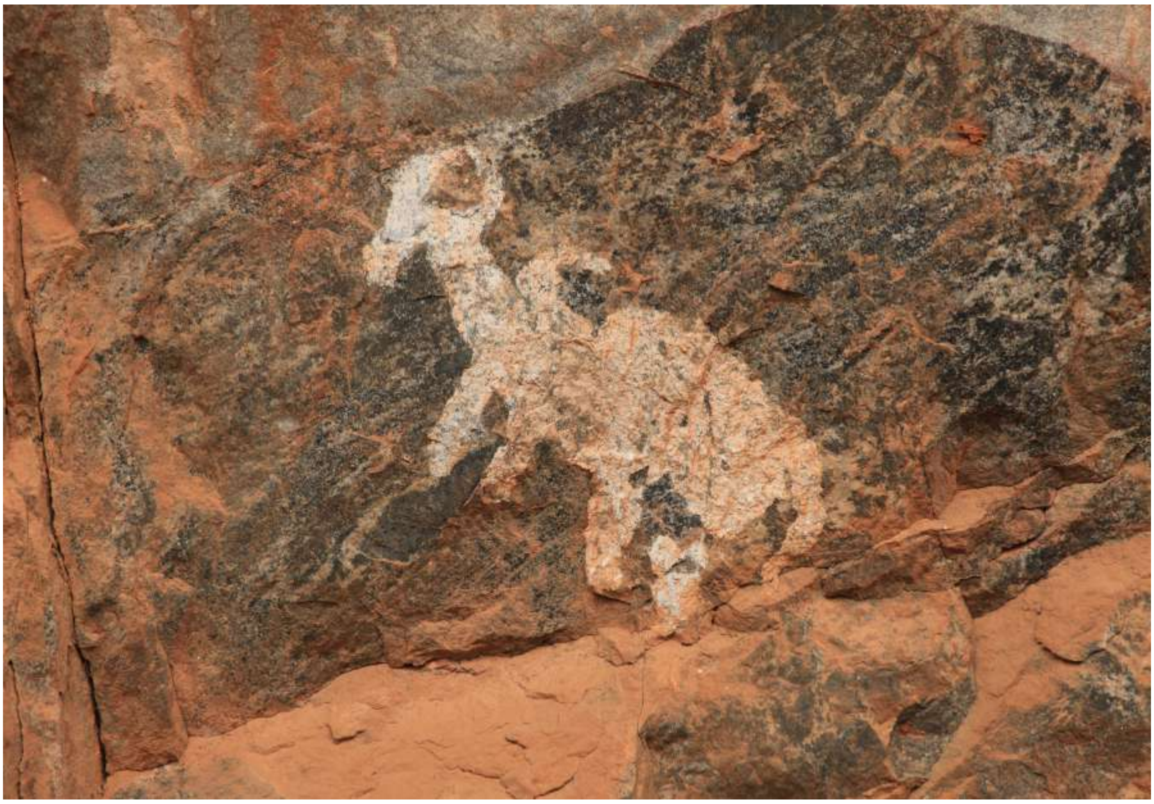


Fig. 4.1.14a Animal figure

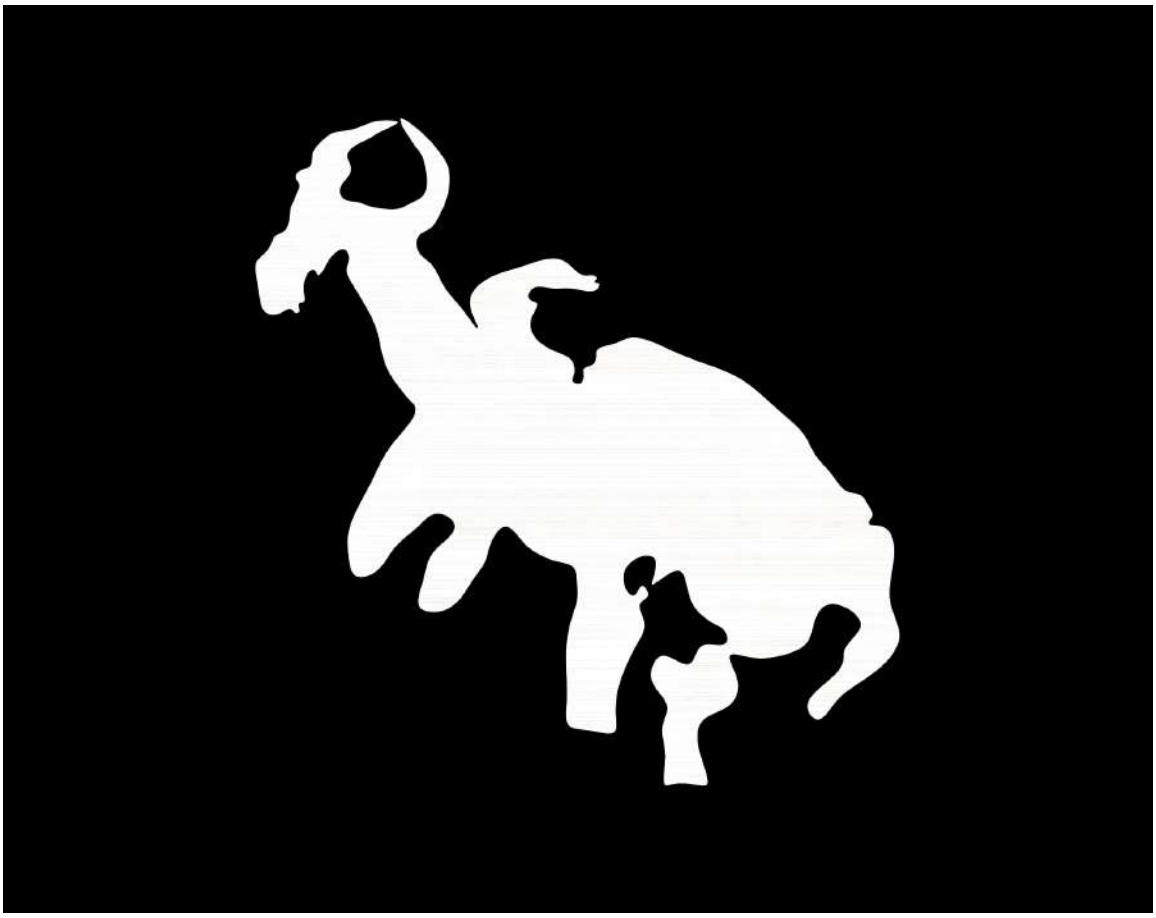


Fig. 4.1.14b Animal figure

An animal figure is depicted in white (Zone-2: Cluster-5). It has conical head with curved sharp horns, a hump, legs and a tail (Figs.4.1.14a and 4.1.14).

Hunters are depicted in white (Zone-2: Cluster-6). A group of seven people are drawn in different postures, some with raised hands and some hanging downwards. One human figure is depicted on a bigger scale with a crown, a thick body and his right hand holding a weapon. Above him, six human figures are shown in front of an animal (Figs.4.1.15a and 4.1.15b). Besides, two animals are shown in a moving posture.

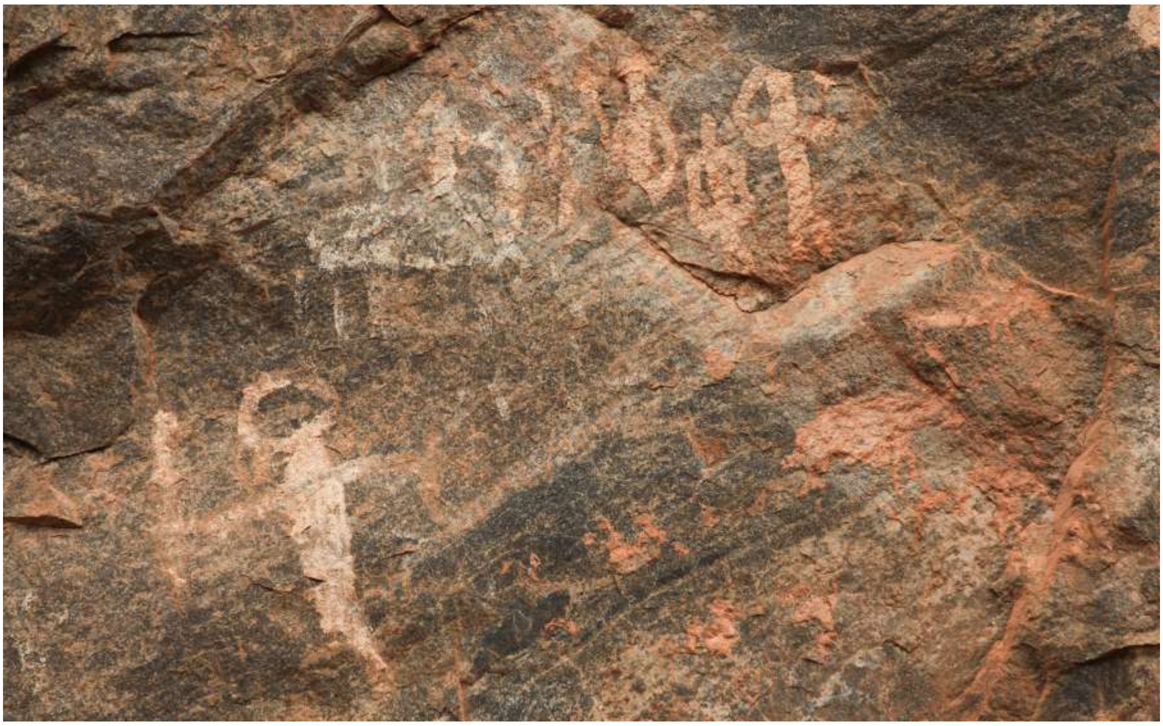


Fig. 4.1.15a Hunters gathering

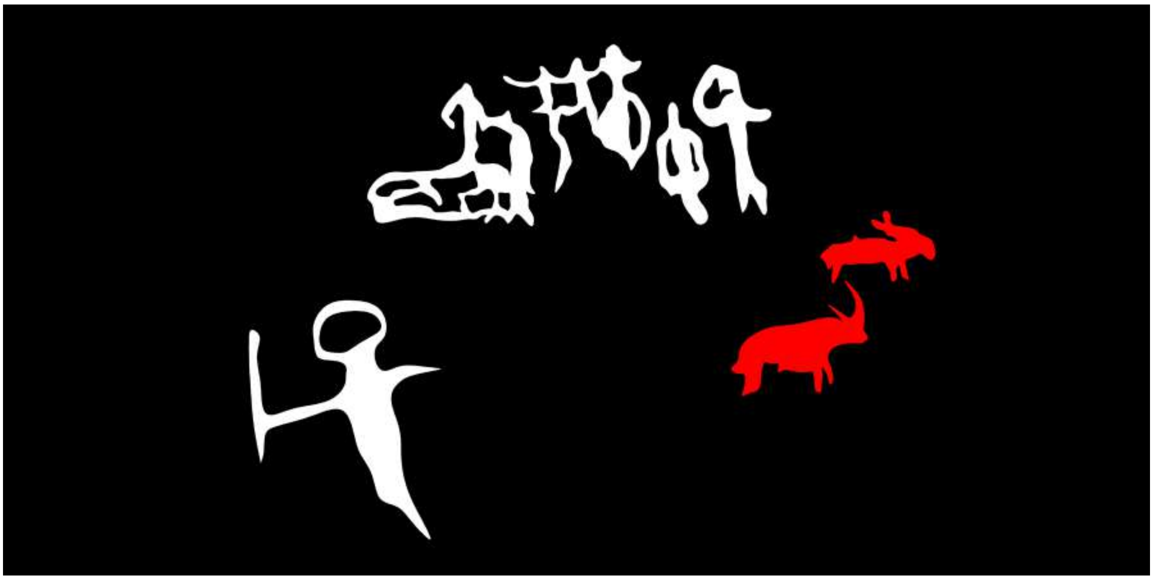


Fig. 4.1.15b Hunters gathering

The celebration scene is depicted in red (Zone-2: Cluster-7). Two rows of people standing together are seen. The top row consists of 7 people standing in a row wielding a sword, bow and arrows. Among them, the person on the extreme left is shown with a headgear. The second group consists of six people are standing in a row holding each other, perhaps representing a dancing scene. (Figs.4.1.16a and 4.1.16b).

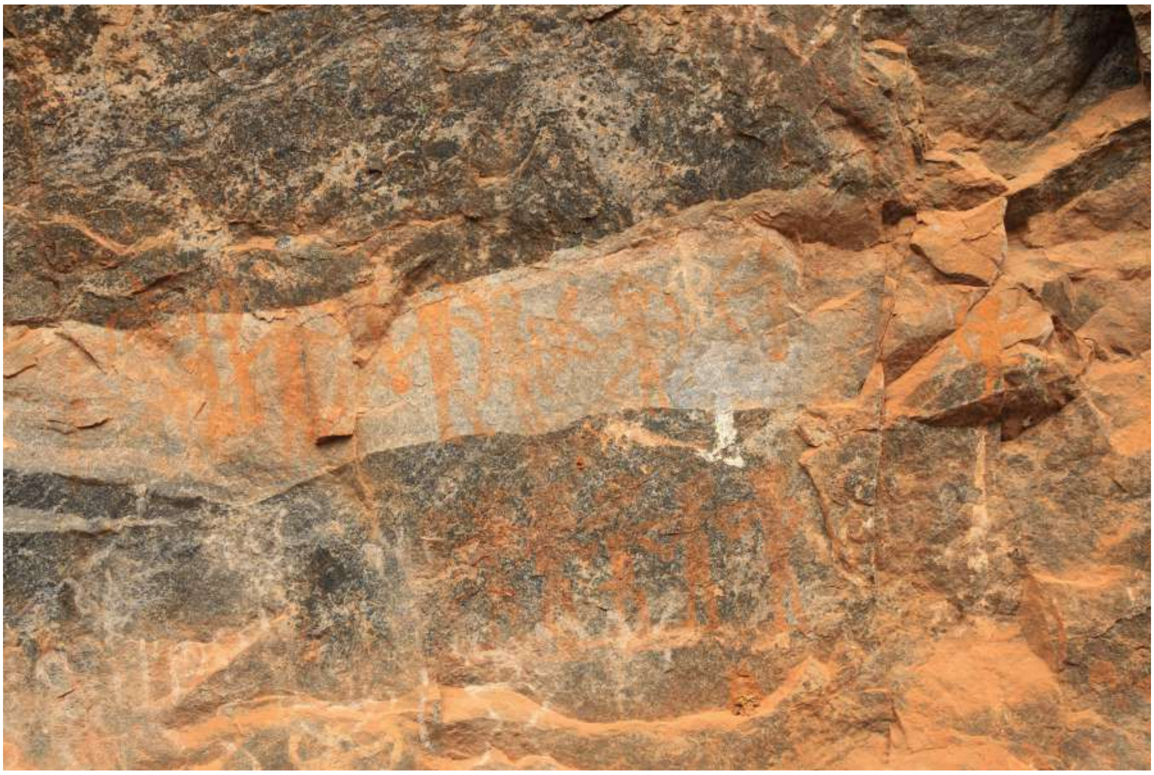


Fig. 4.1.16a Celebration scene

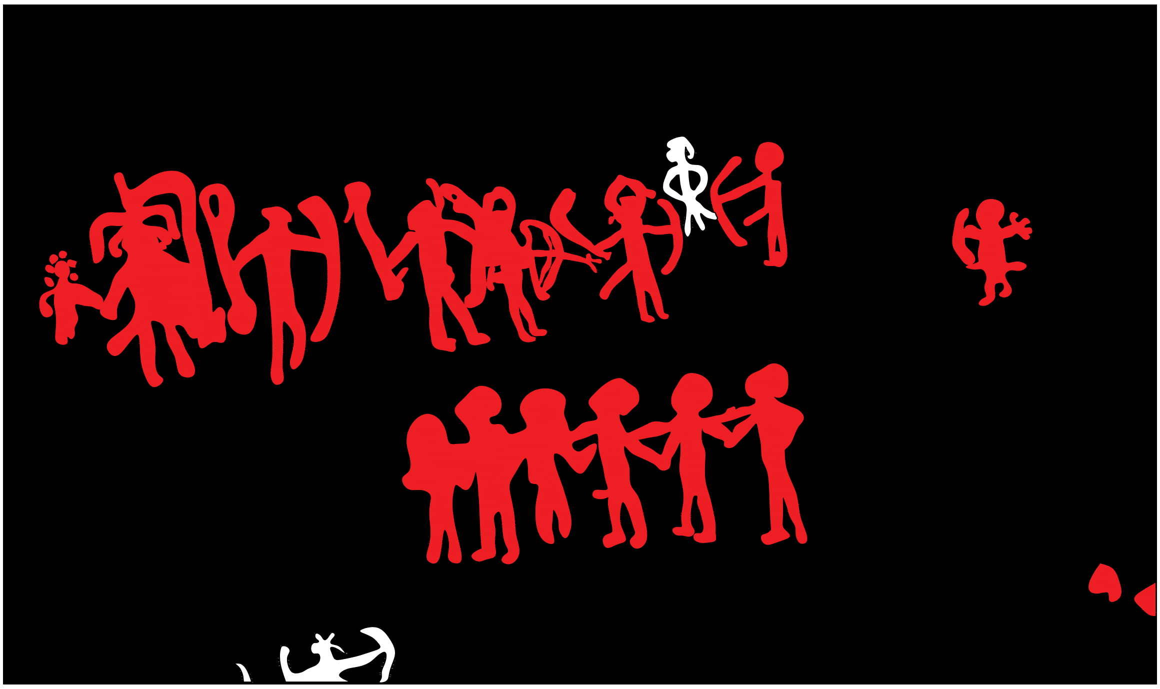


Fig. 4.1.16b Celebration scene

A standing human figure is depicted in red ochre (Zone-2: Cluster-8) holding a weapon in the right hand and the left hand is stretched open (Figs.4.1.17a and 4.1.17b). A sheath-like object is tucked in the waist.

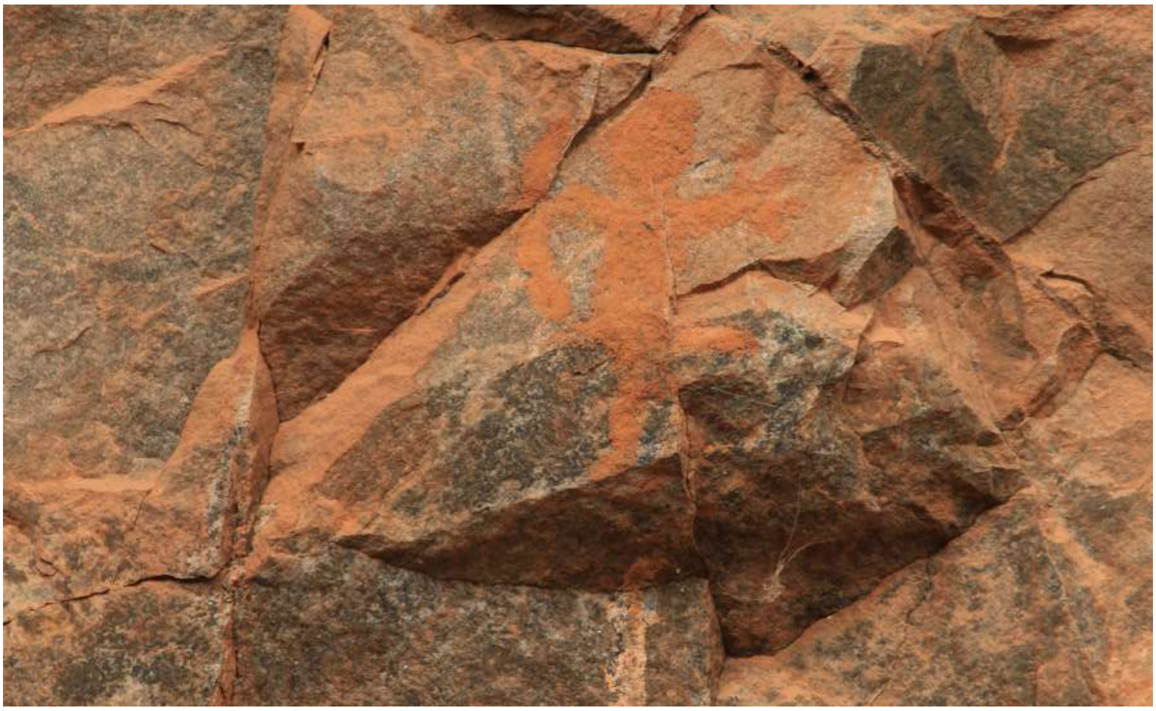


Fig. 4.1.17a A human figure

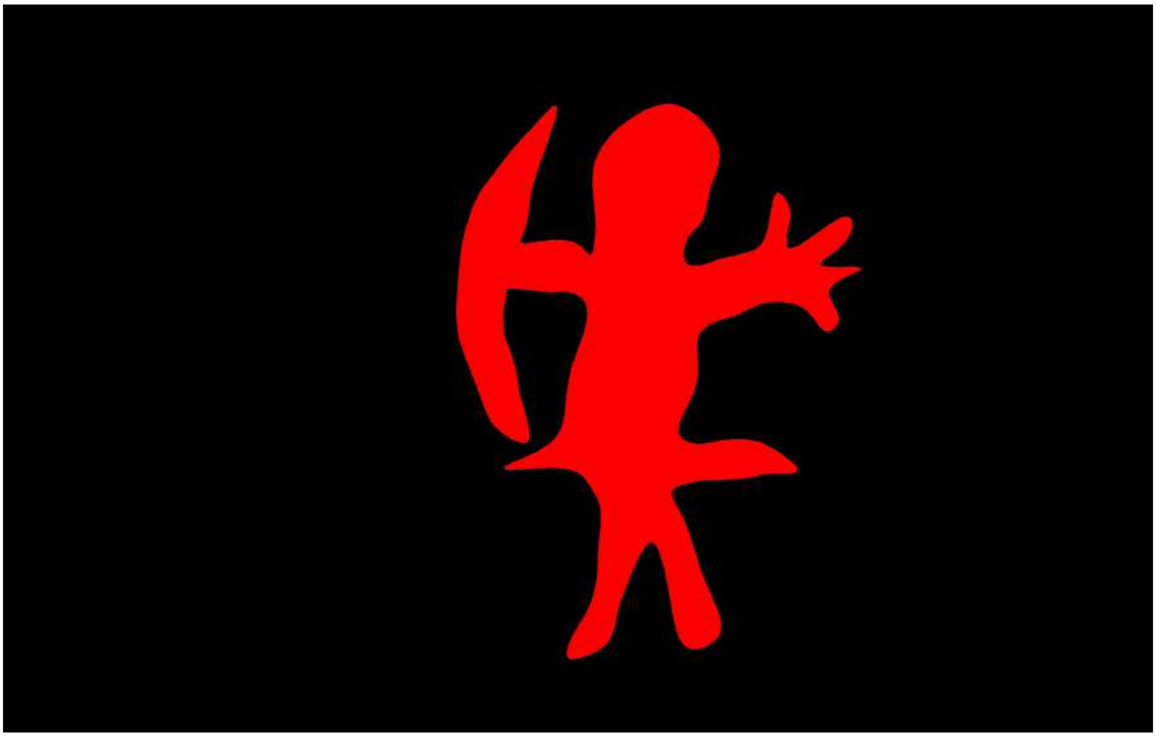


Fig. 4.1.17b A human figure

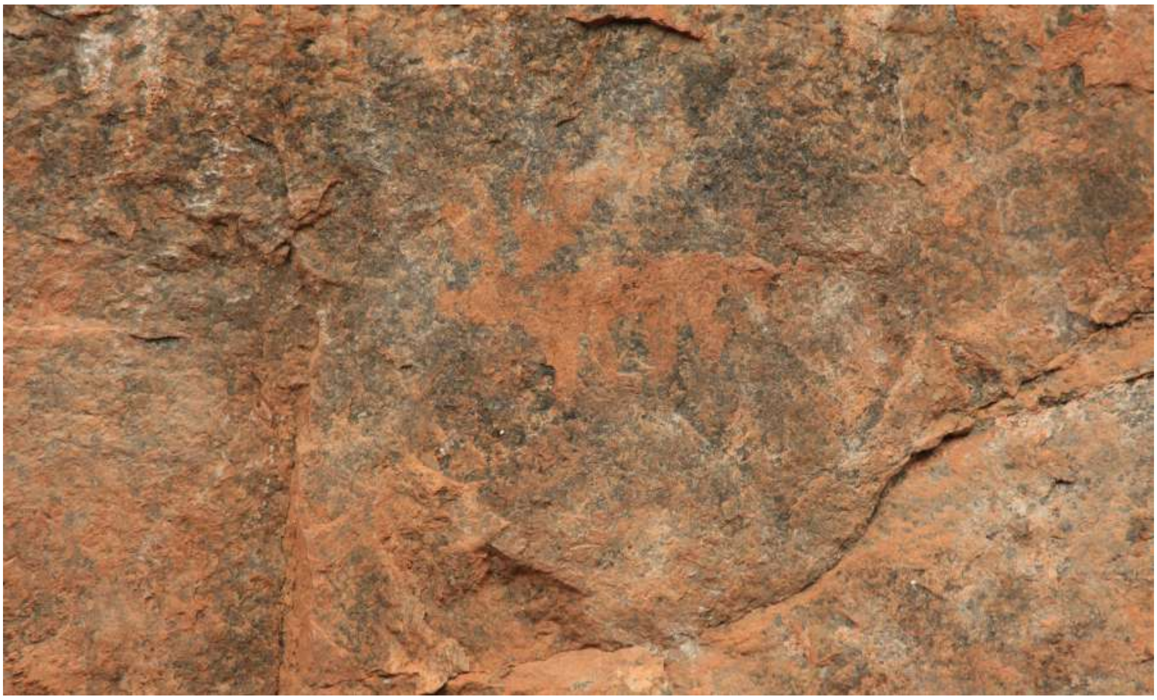


Fig. 4.1.18a An animal

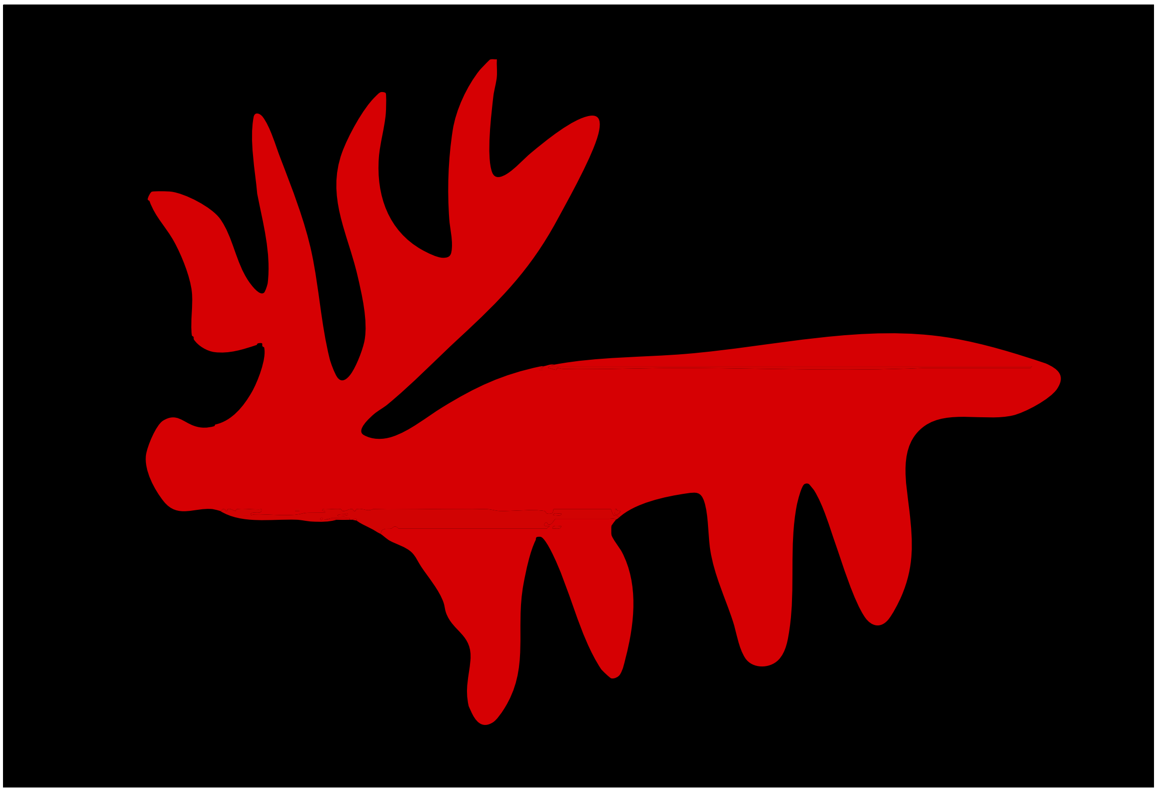


Fig. 4.1.18b An animal

An animal is depicted in red ochre (Zone-2: Cluster-9). The horn of the animal is similar to a deer. The animal is having two horns with branches, four legs and a small tail is shown in a straight line (Figs. 4.1.18a and 4.1.18b).

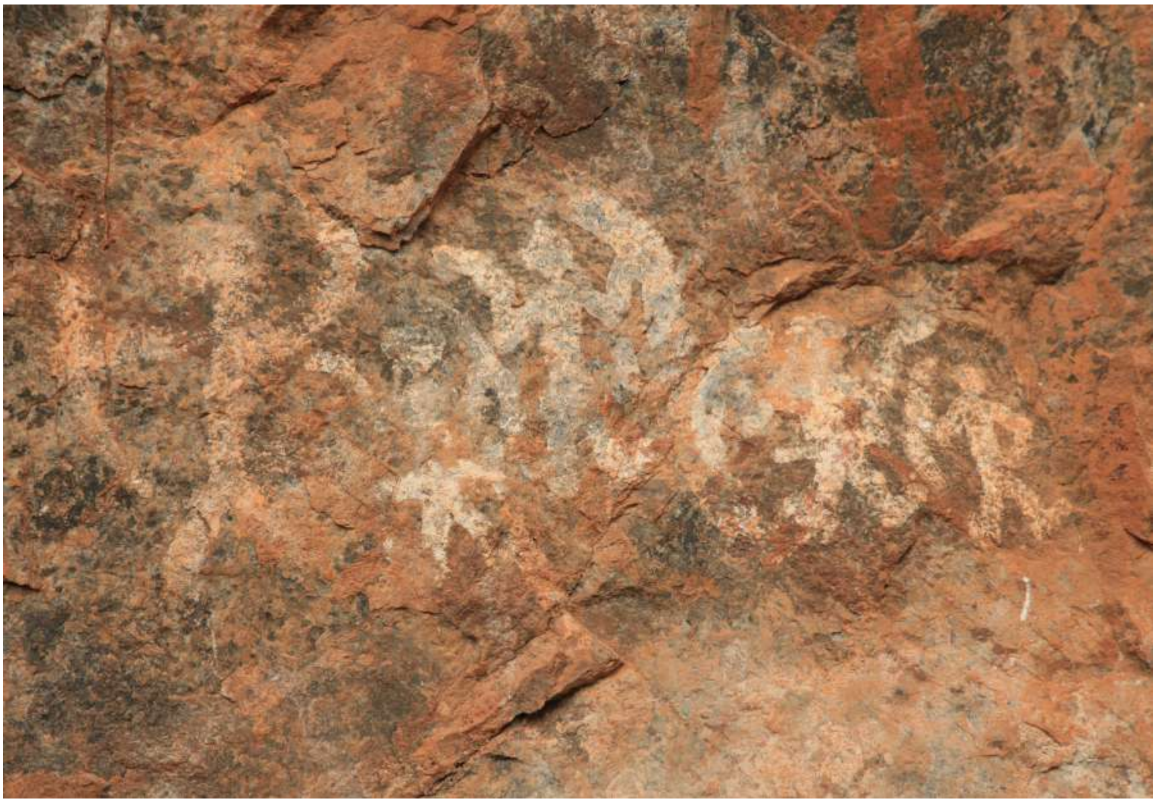


Fig. 4.1.19a Fighting scene

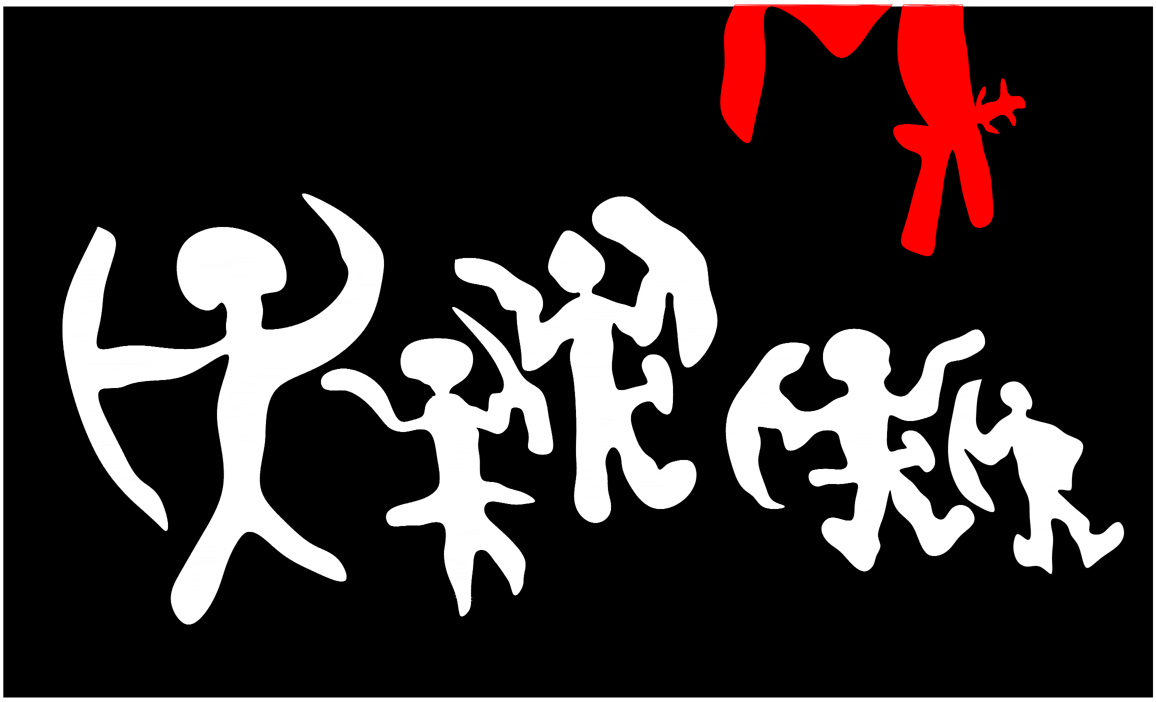


Fig. 4.1.19b Fighting scene

The hunting scene is depicted in red and white colours (Zone-2: Cluster-10). Five human figures holding a shield and a weapon are depicted (Figs.4.1.19a and 4.1.19b).

An animal facing a human is depicted in red and white colours (Zone-2: Cluster-11).

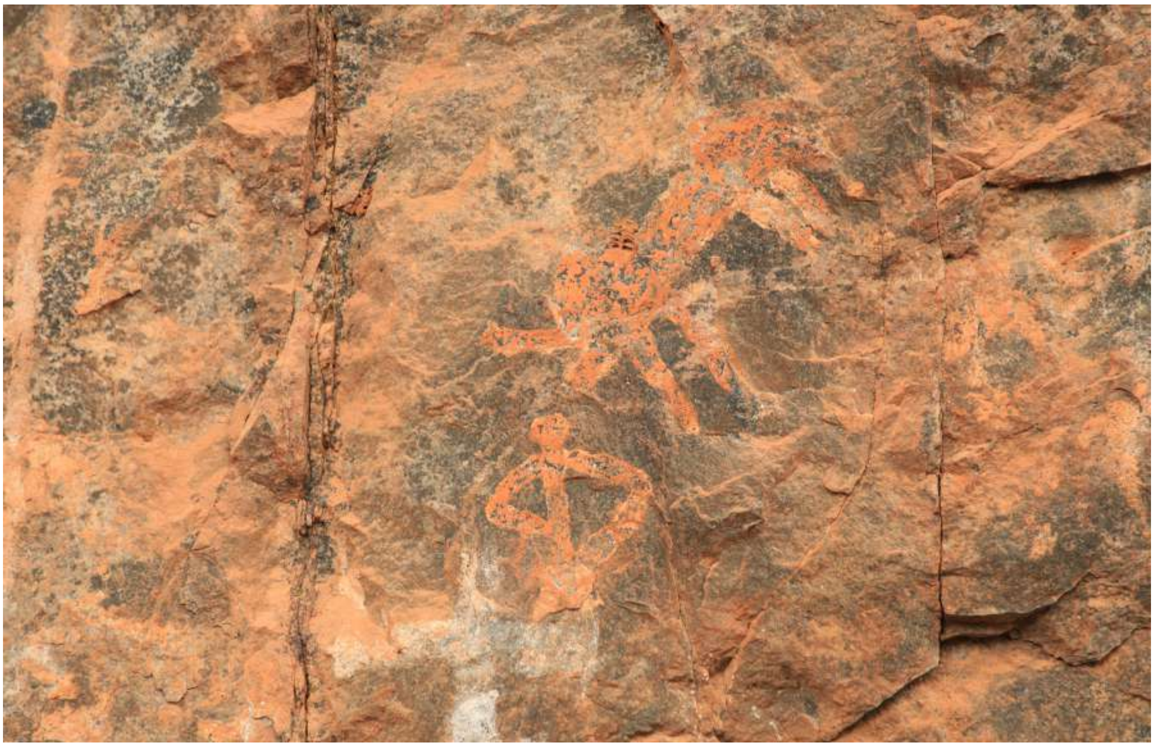


Fig. 4.1.20a Animal and human figures

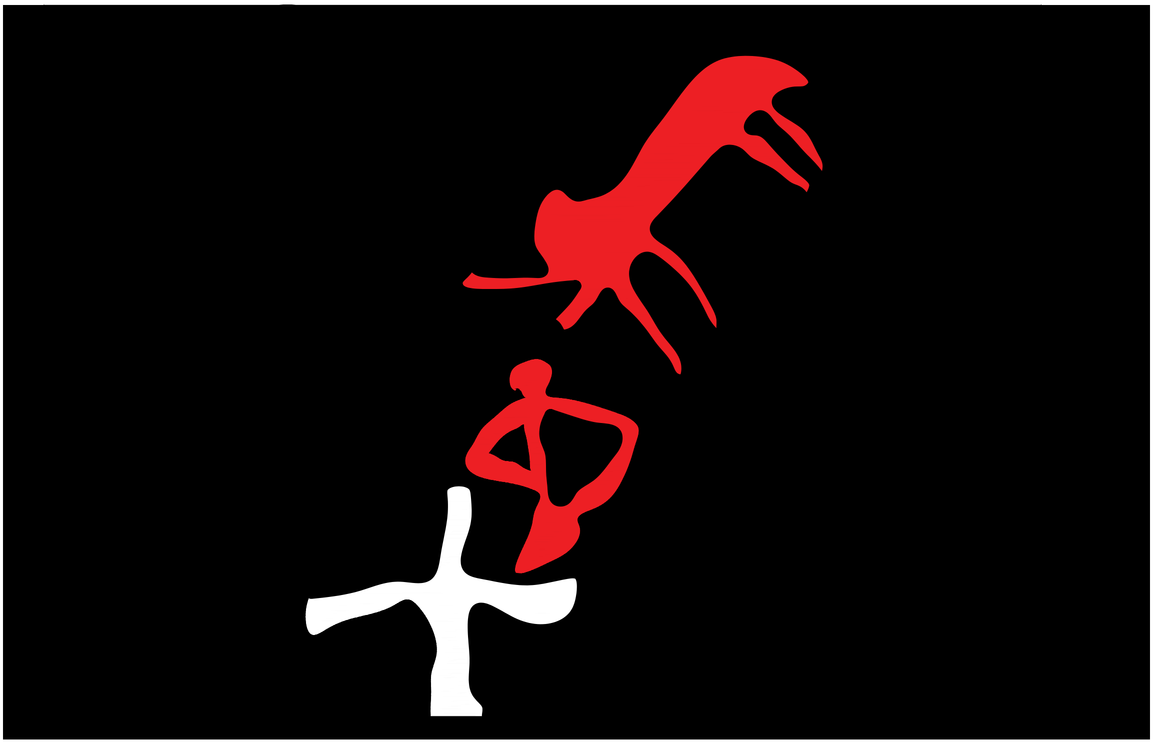


Fig. 4.1.20b Animal and human figures

Three images are depicted two human figures and one animal figure. The human figure is standing in akimbo. The animal figure is horned, muscular and have a long tail. Another human figure is depicted with outstretched hands (Figs.4.1.20a and 4.1.20b).

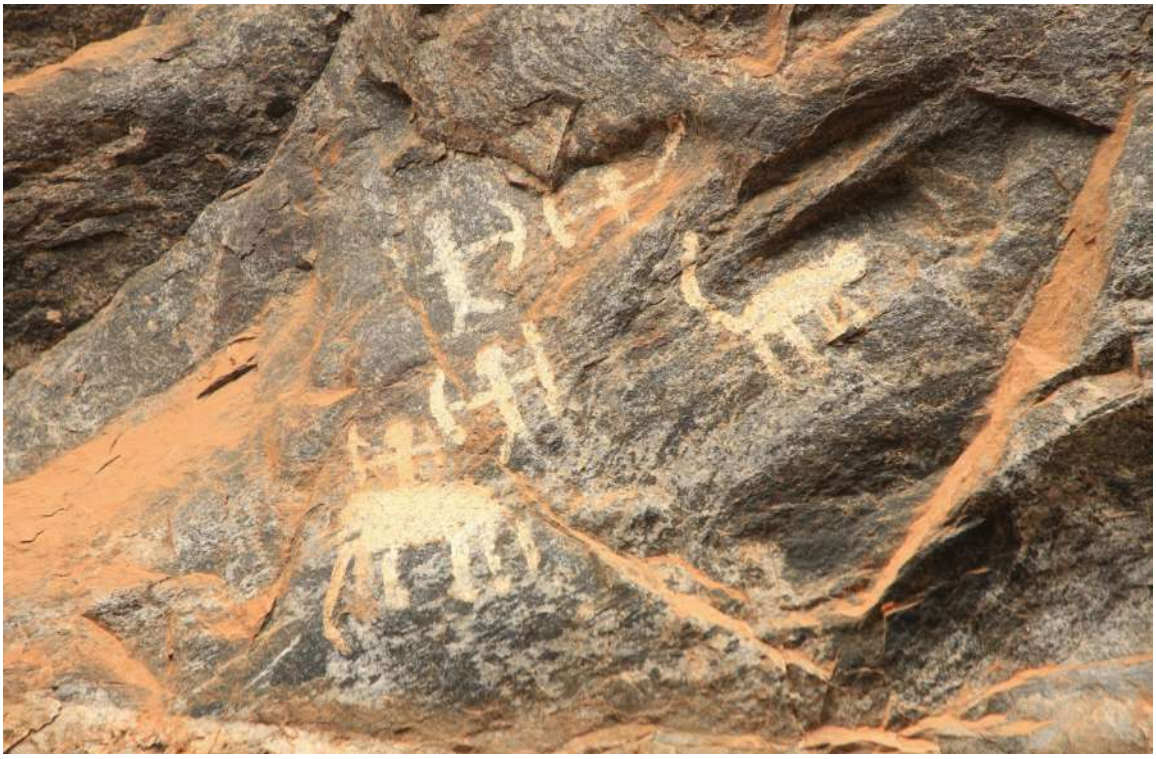


Fig. 4.1.21a Hunting scene

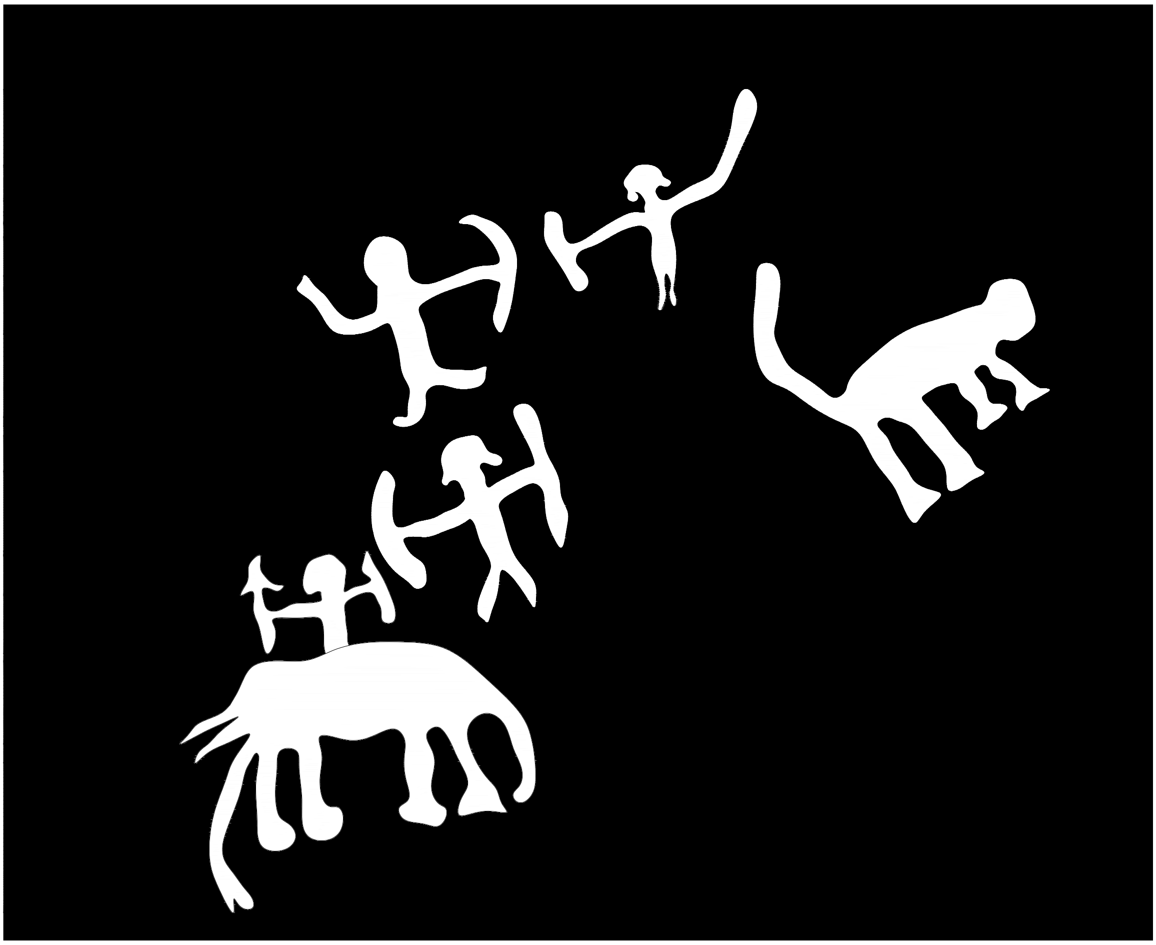


Fig. 4.1.21b Hunting scene

A hunting scene is depicted in white with three human figures holding a weapon ambushing an animal. Another human figure mounted on an elephant is depicted but facing in the opposite direction (Zone-2: Cluster-12). All four human figures hold probably a bow and arrow (Figs.4.1.21a and 4.1.20b).

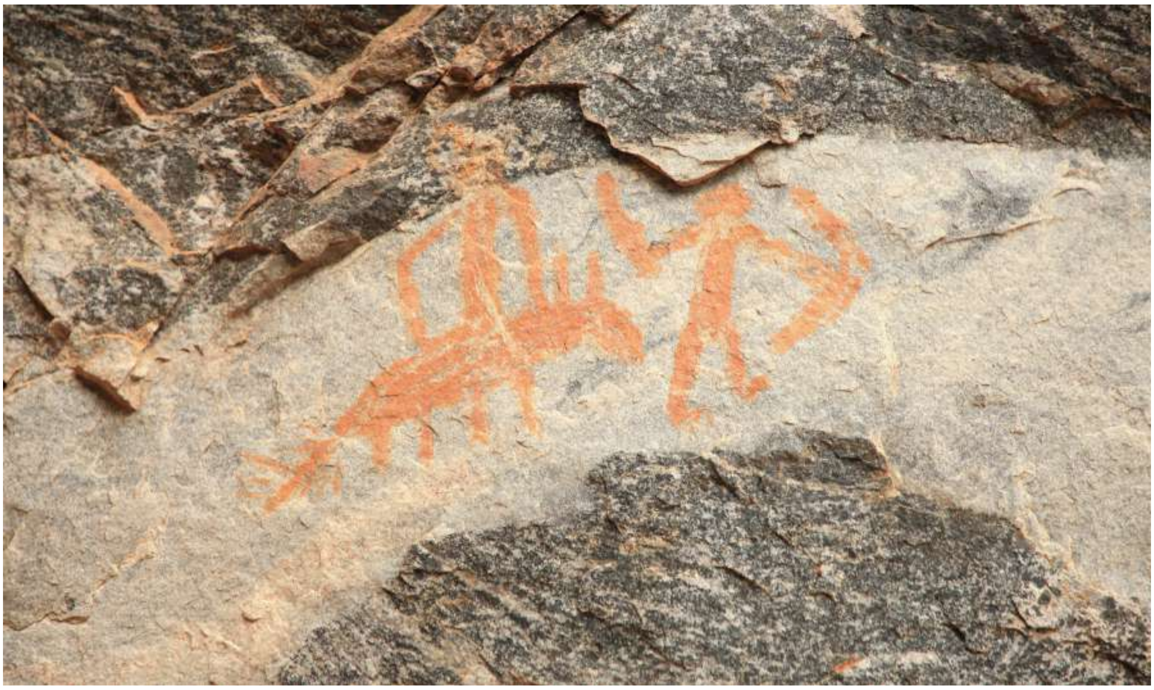


Fig. 4.1.22a Hunters scene

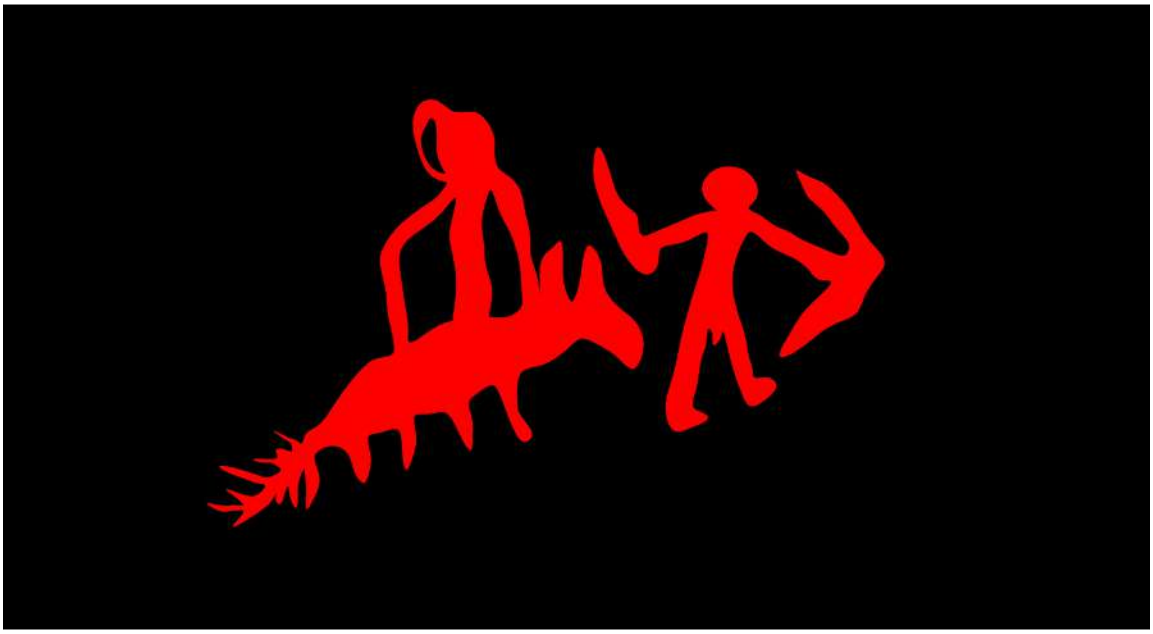


Fig. 4.1.22b Hunters scene

Hunters are depicted in red (Zone-2: Cluster-13). This panel depicts two human figures. The left one is mounted on an animal having two upright horns, four legs and a long tail with hairs. The human figure is shown without a weapon. Another person standing in front of him is in a charging position with shield and sword (Figs. 4.1.22a and 4.1.22b).

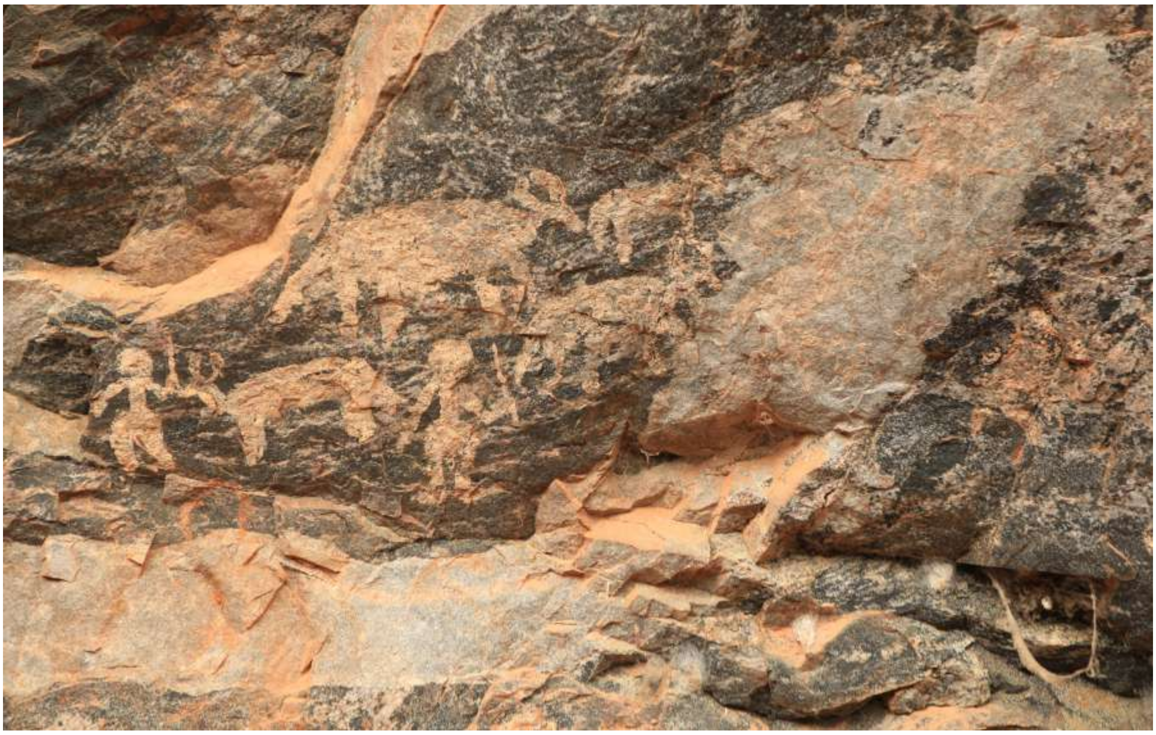


Fig. 4.1.23a Domestication of animal

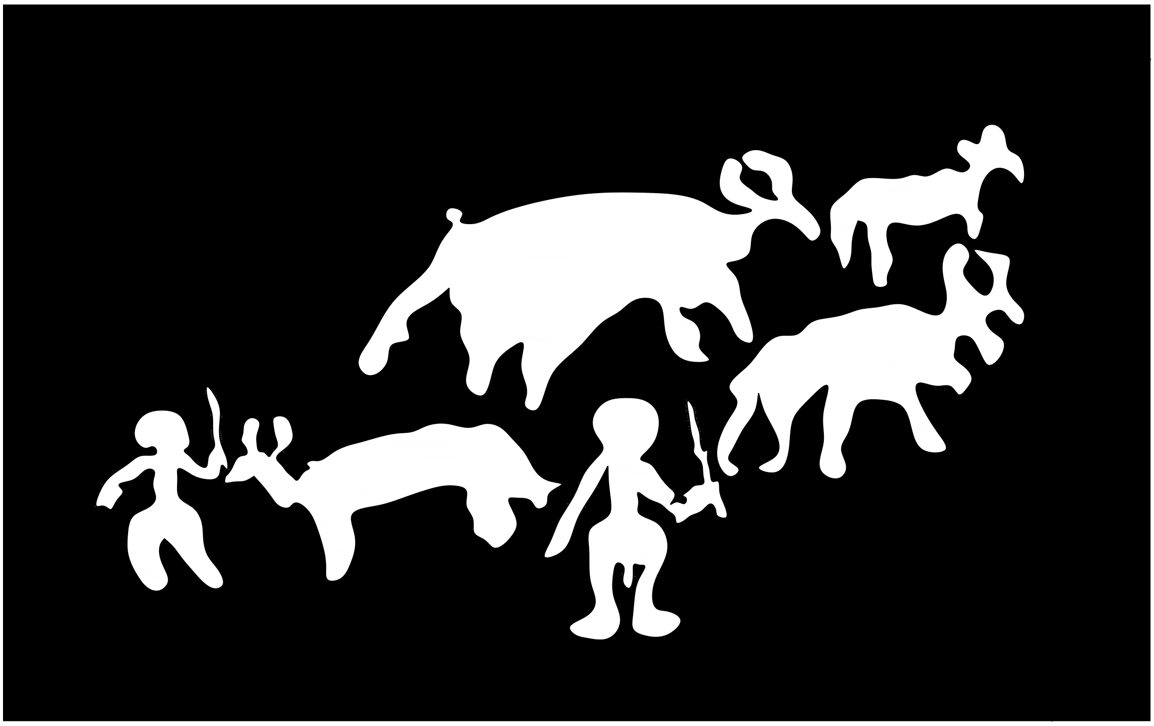


Fig. 4.1.23b Domestication of animal

The cattle are depicted in red (Zone-2: Cluster-14). Two human figures are drawn with round heads, wearing lower garment and holding a stick in their left hand. Five animals are depicted in a moving position. It looks they are guarding or watching the grazing cattle (Figs.4.1.23a and 4.1.23b).

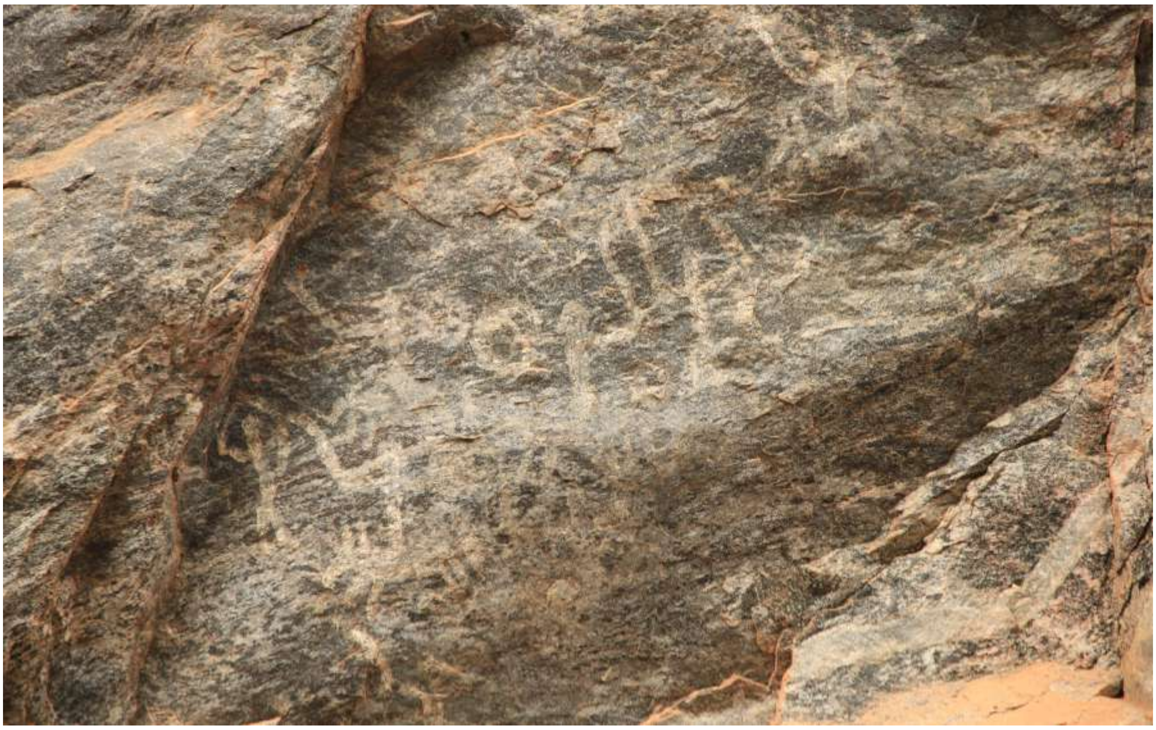


Fig. 4.1.24a Cattle raid

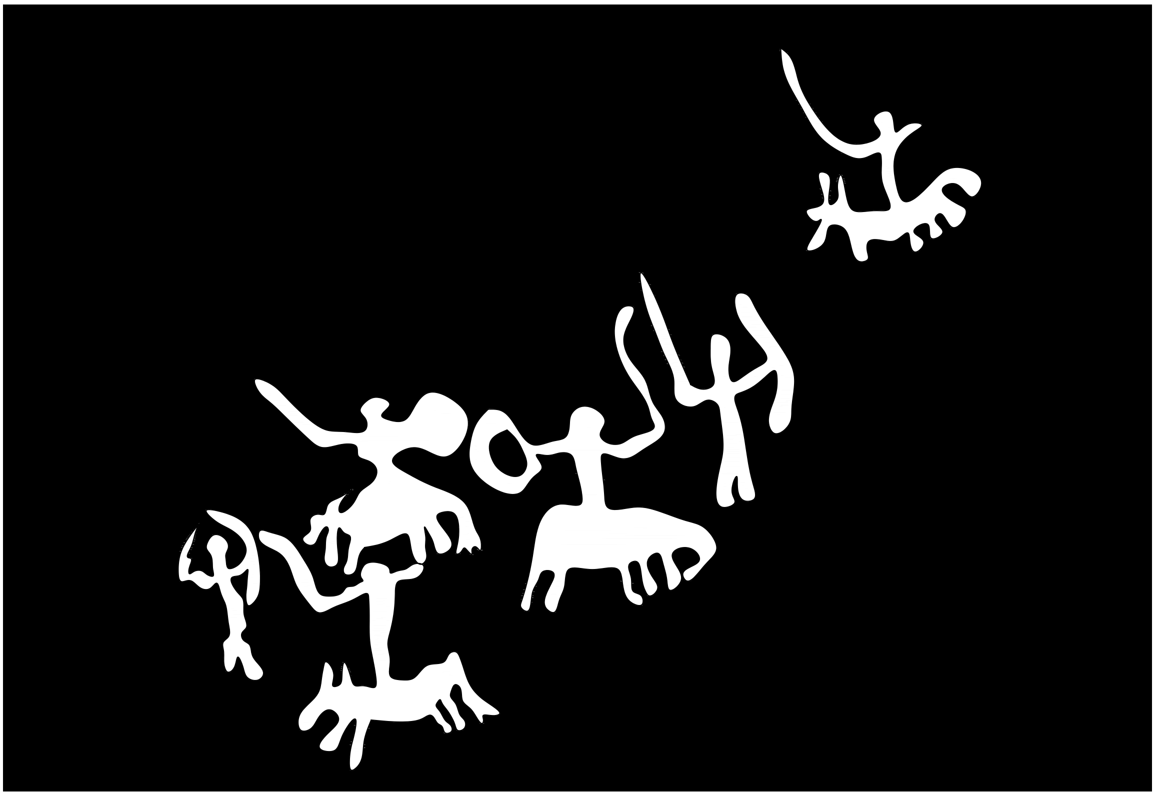


Fig. 4.1.24b Cattle raid

Two groups of men facing each other holding weapons and mounted on animals are shown in white (Zone-2: Cluster-15). The panel looks like representing a cattle raid (Figs.4.1.24a and 4.1.24b).

A hunting scene is depicted in white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-1). In this panel, a hunter is attacking an animal with the help of a stick like long weapon. The animal figure is shown in a running posture (Figs.4.1.25a and 4.1.25b).

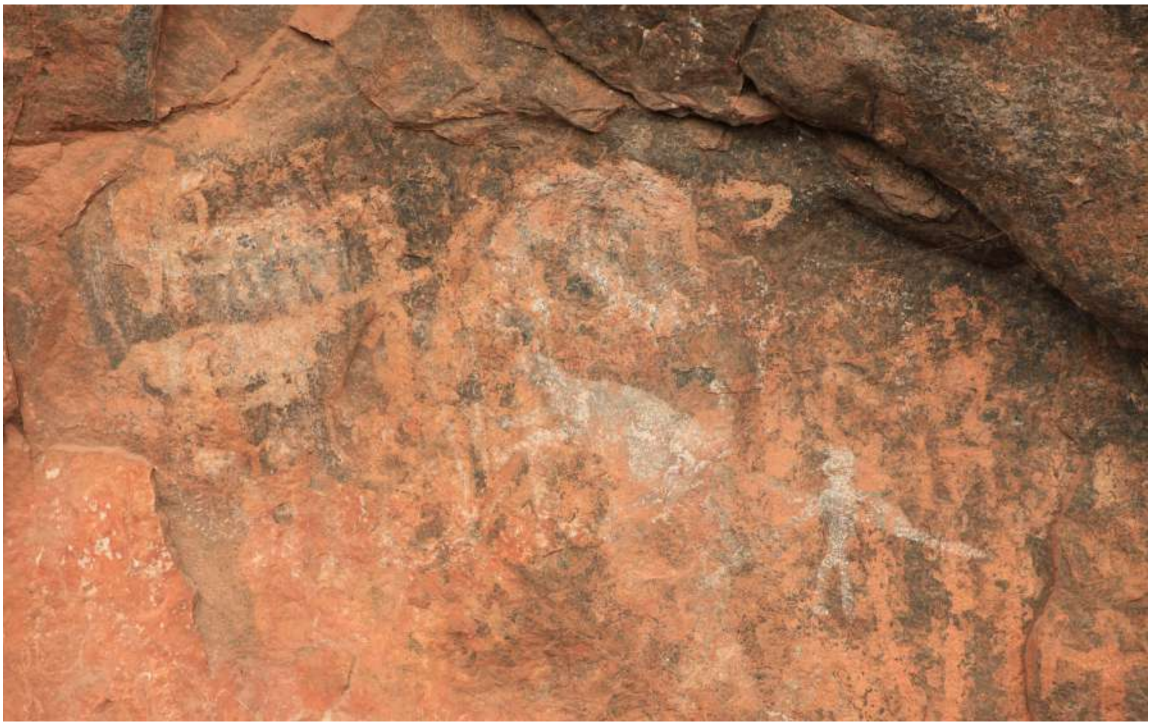


Fig. 4.1.25a Hunting scene

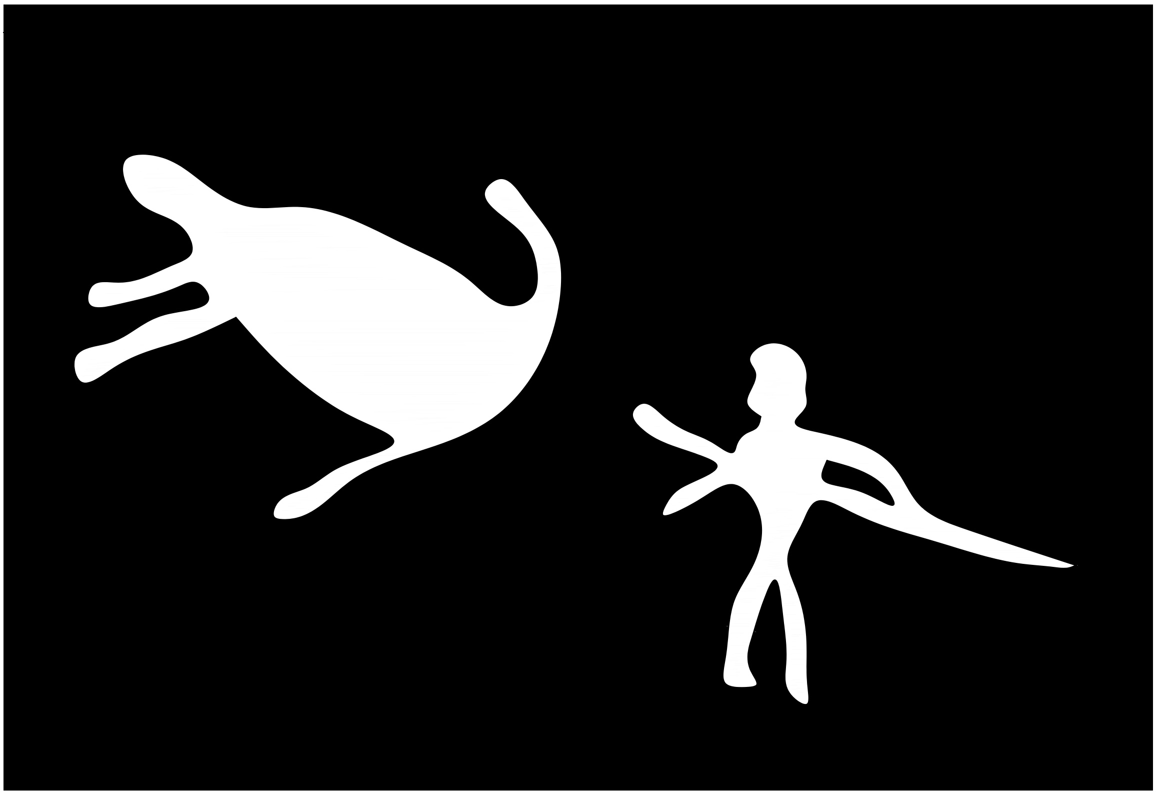


Fig. 4.1.25b Hunting scene

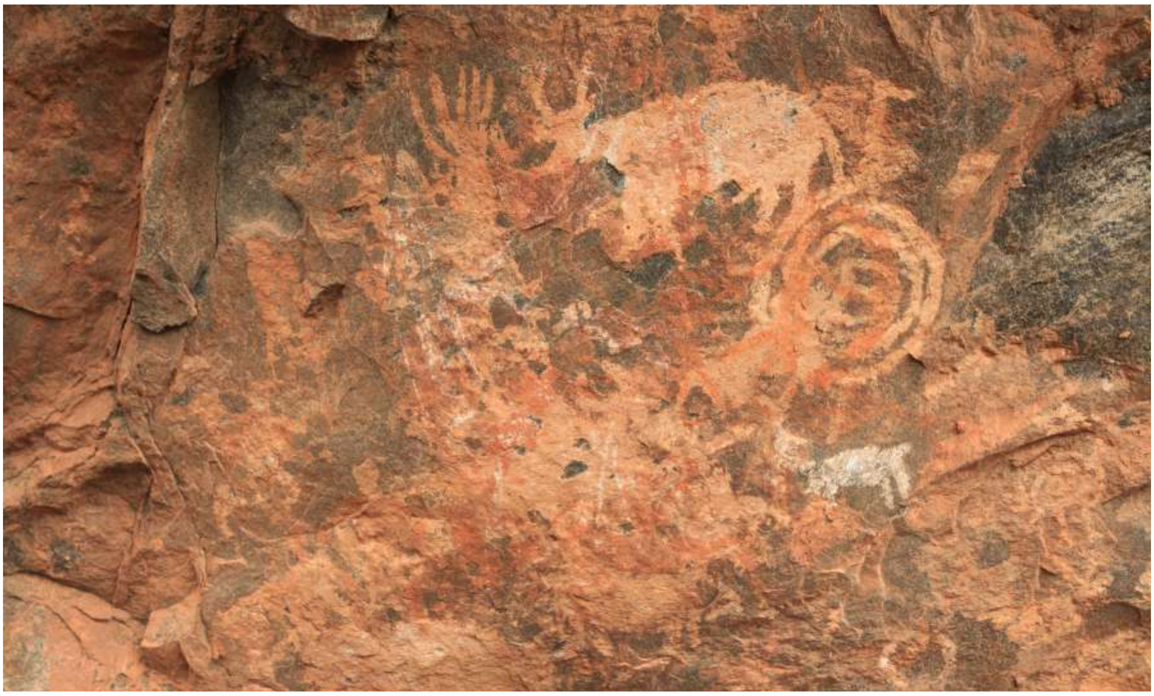


Fig. 4.1.26a Geometric designs

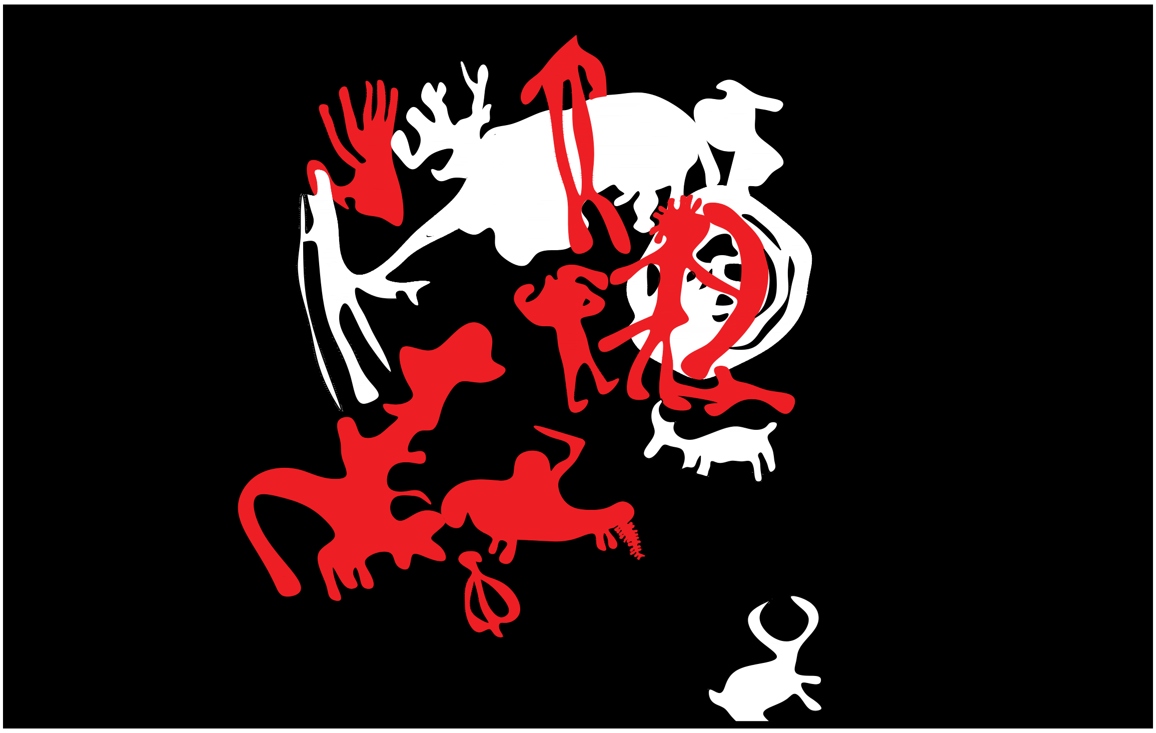


Fig. 4.1.26b Geometric designs

Animals associated with a geometric design, a concentric circle, are depicted in both red and white colours (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-2). Two animals are very clear, one is in bigger size with horns, having a robust body structure with legs and a lengthy tail. Most of the paintings are faded (Figs.4.1.26a and 4.1.26b).

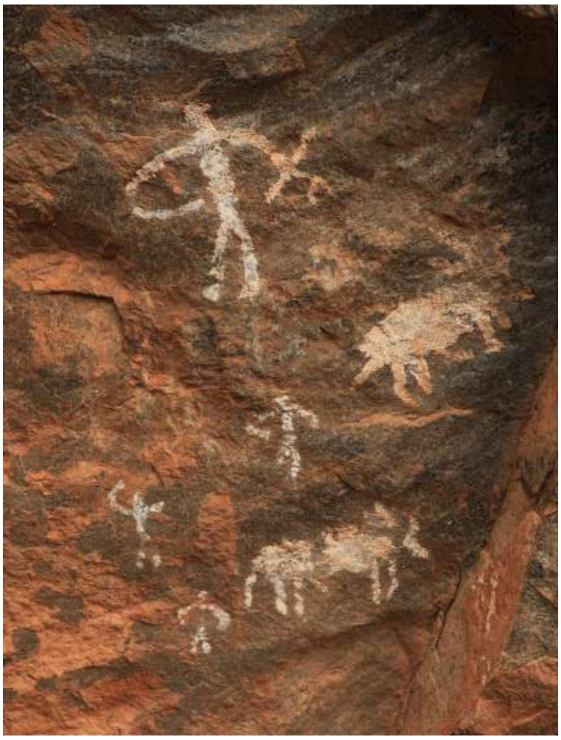


Fig. 4.1.27a Hunting scene

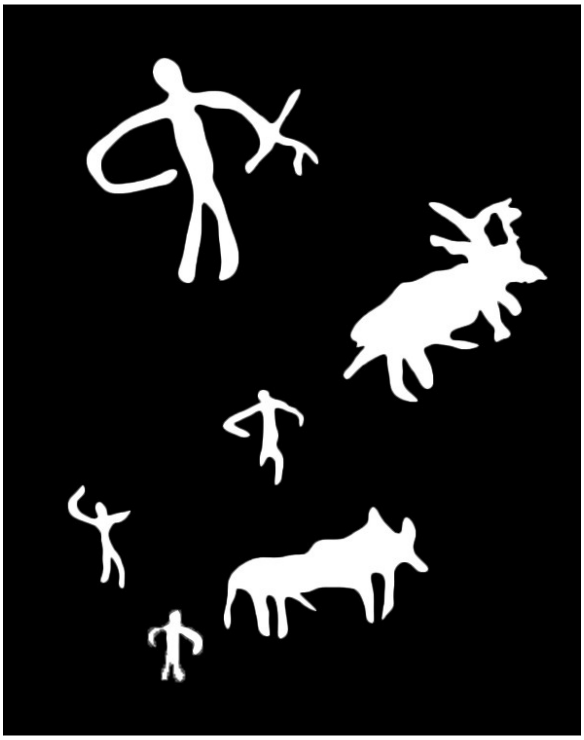


Fig. 4.1.27b Hunting scene

The hunting scene is depicted in white pigment (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-3). Four humans are shown in a hunting posture around two massive animals. A human figure drawn larger in size is armed with a bow and arrow. The rest of the three are drawn in smaller size with weapons. The animals are depicted with a conical head, muscular body with legs and tail (Figs.4.1.27a and 4.1.27b).

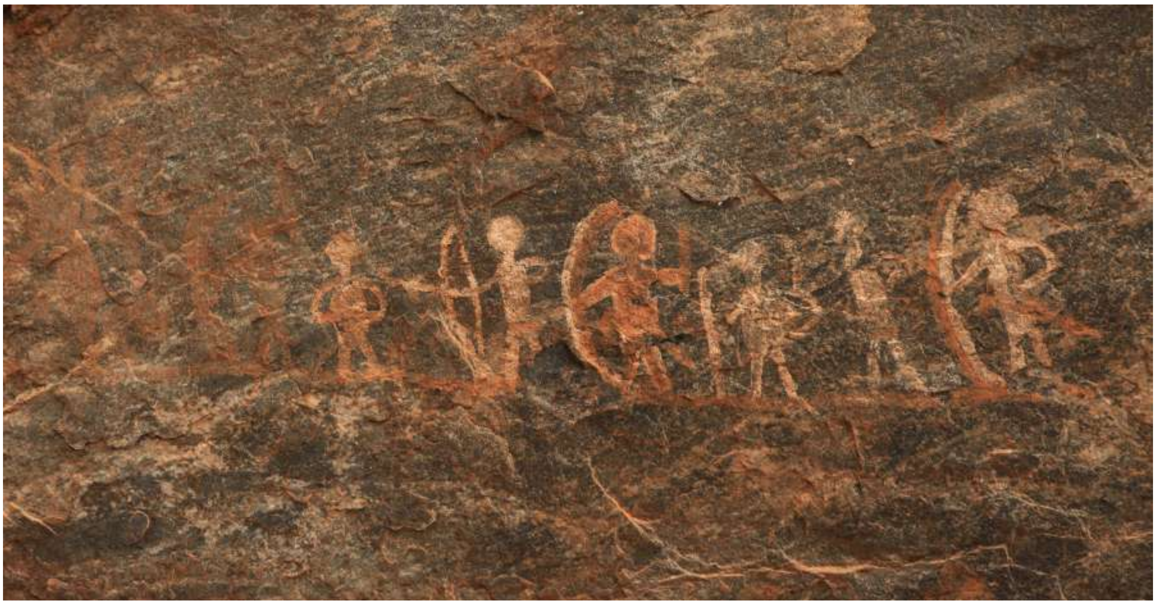


Fig. 4.1.28a War-like scene

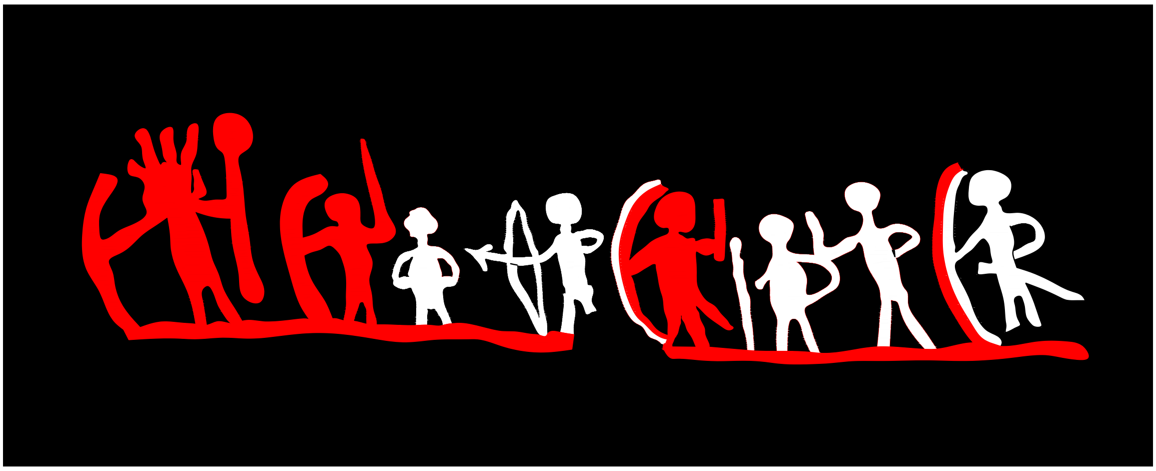


Fig. 4.1.28b War-like scene

A war-like scene is depicted in red and white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-4) represented by two groups of people. One group is painted in red and has five humans with weapons in their hands. The opponent group is represented by six humans holding bows and arrows. Both groups of people are standing on a flat surface, which is indicated by a thick horizontal line (Figs.4.1.28a and 4.1.28b).

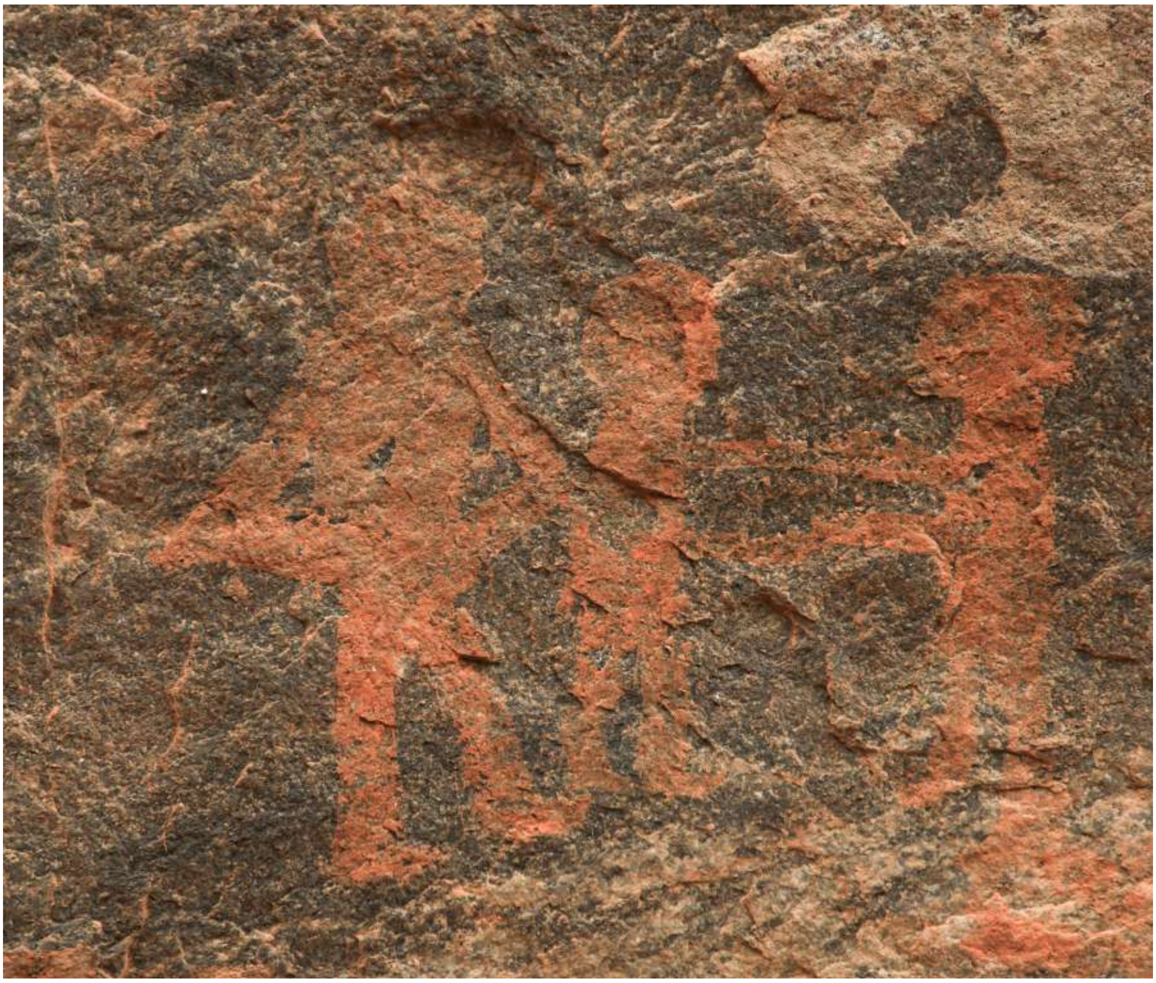


Fig. 4.1.29a Three human figures

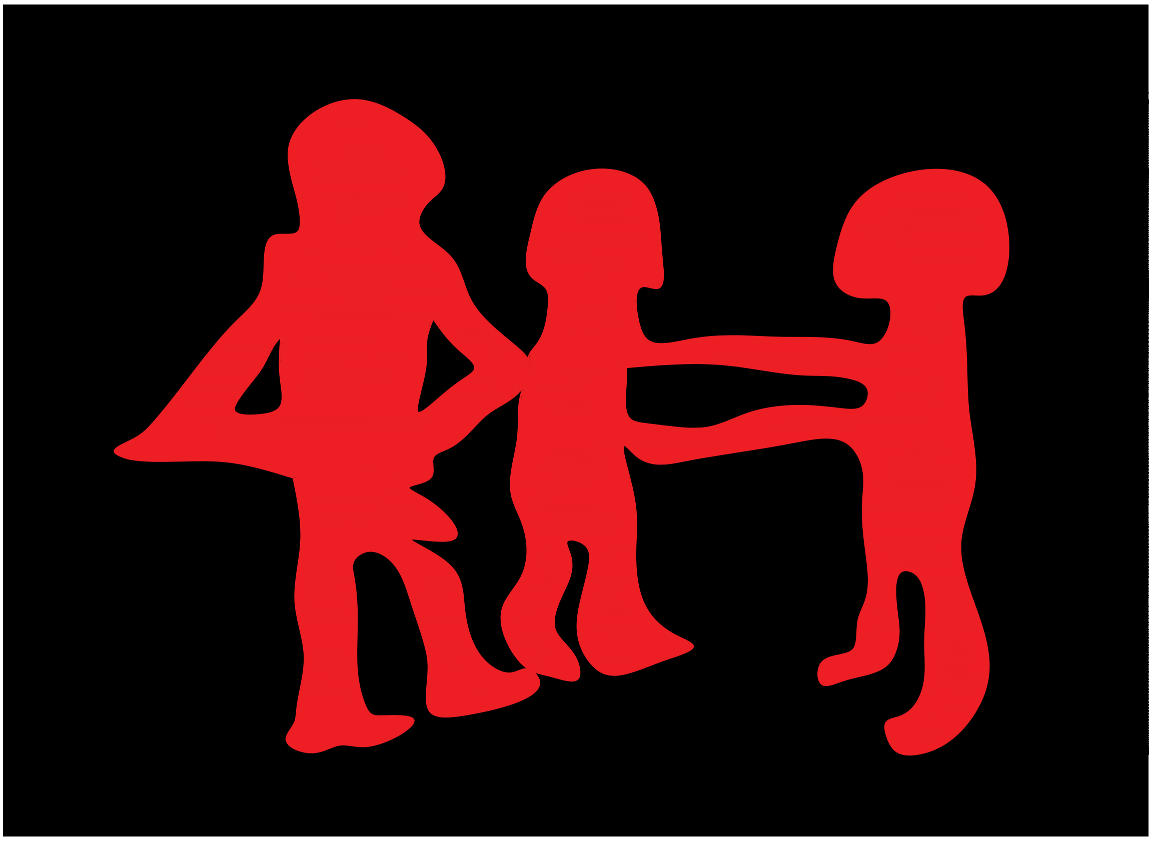


Fig. 4.1.29b Three human figures

Three human figures are depicted in red (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-5). Two humans are in a standing posture holding their hands and are standing next to a large human figure standing akimbo (Figs.4.1.29a and 4.1.29b).

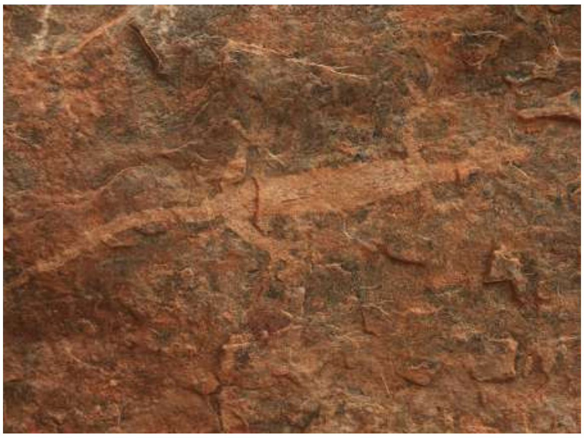


Fig. 4.1.30a Reptile

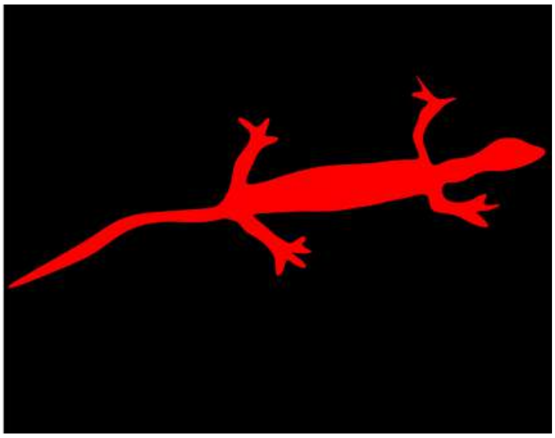


Fig. 4.1.30b Reptile

A long-bodied reptile, probably a wood lizard, is depicted in red (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-6). (Figs.4.1.30a and 4.1.30b).

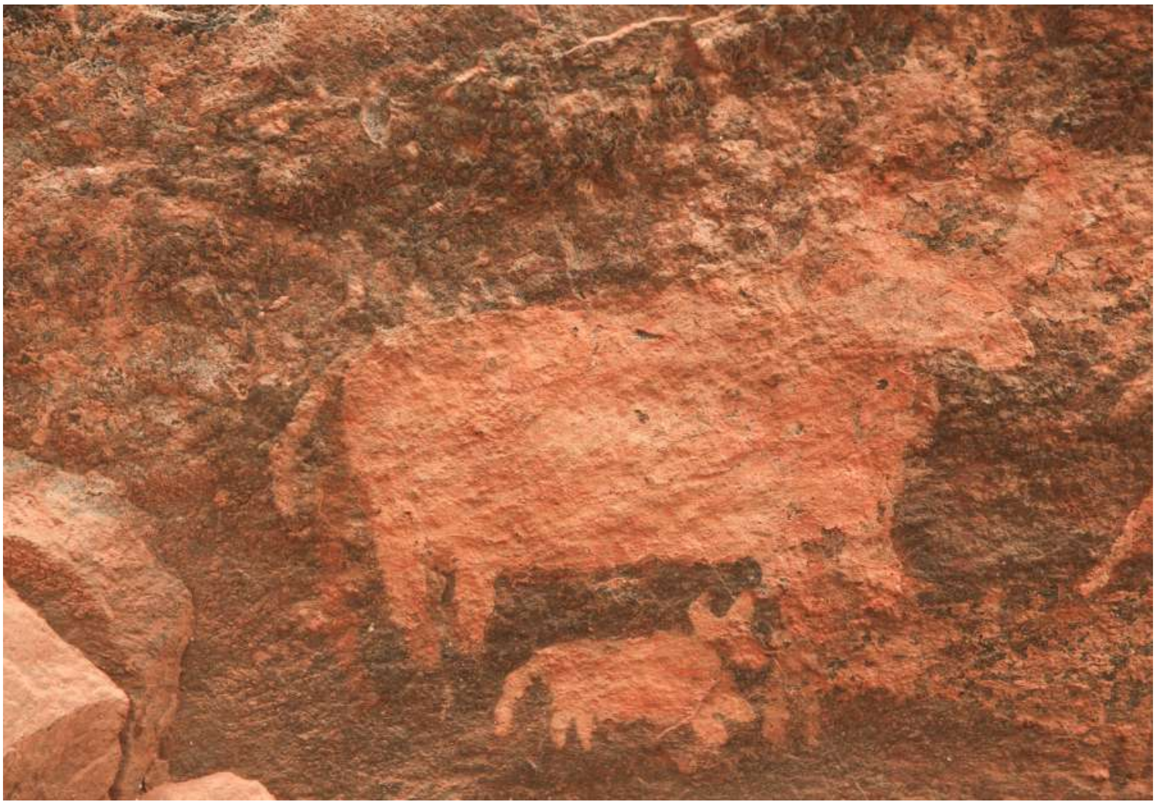


Fig. 4.1.31a Cattle with calf

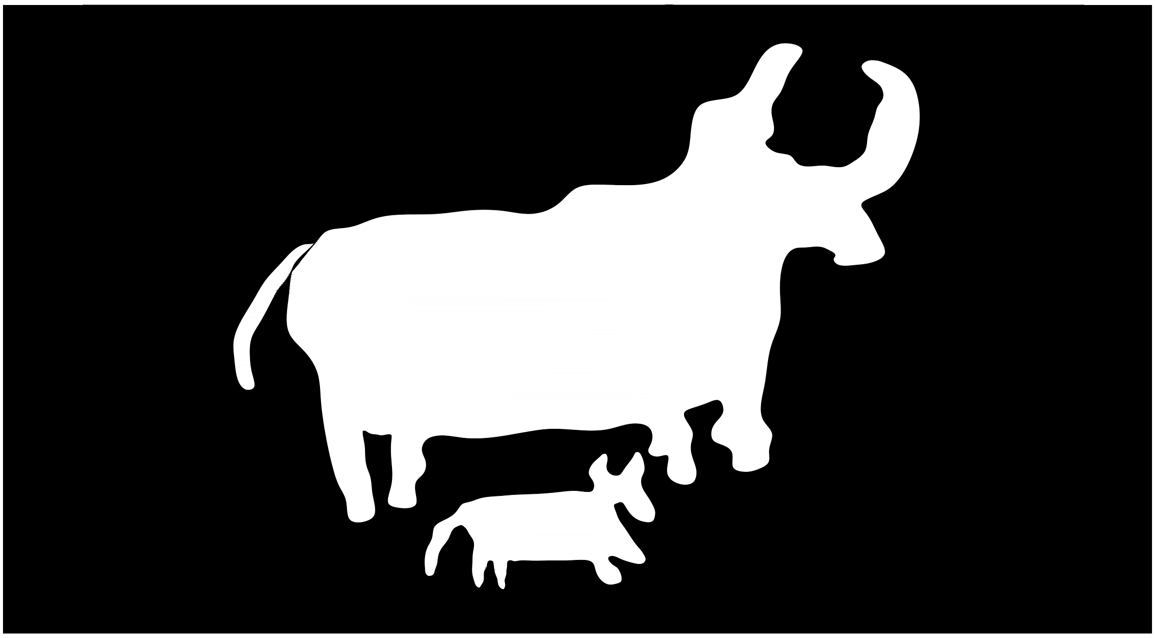


Fig. 4.1.31b Cattle with calf

A buffalo or a cow with a calf is depicted in white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-7). The mother cow is shown in a larger size whereas the calf is shown comparatively in a smaller size. The body of the cow and the calf are filled with pigment (Figs.4.1.31a and 4.1.31b).

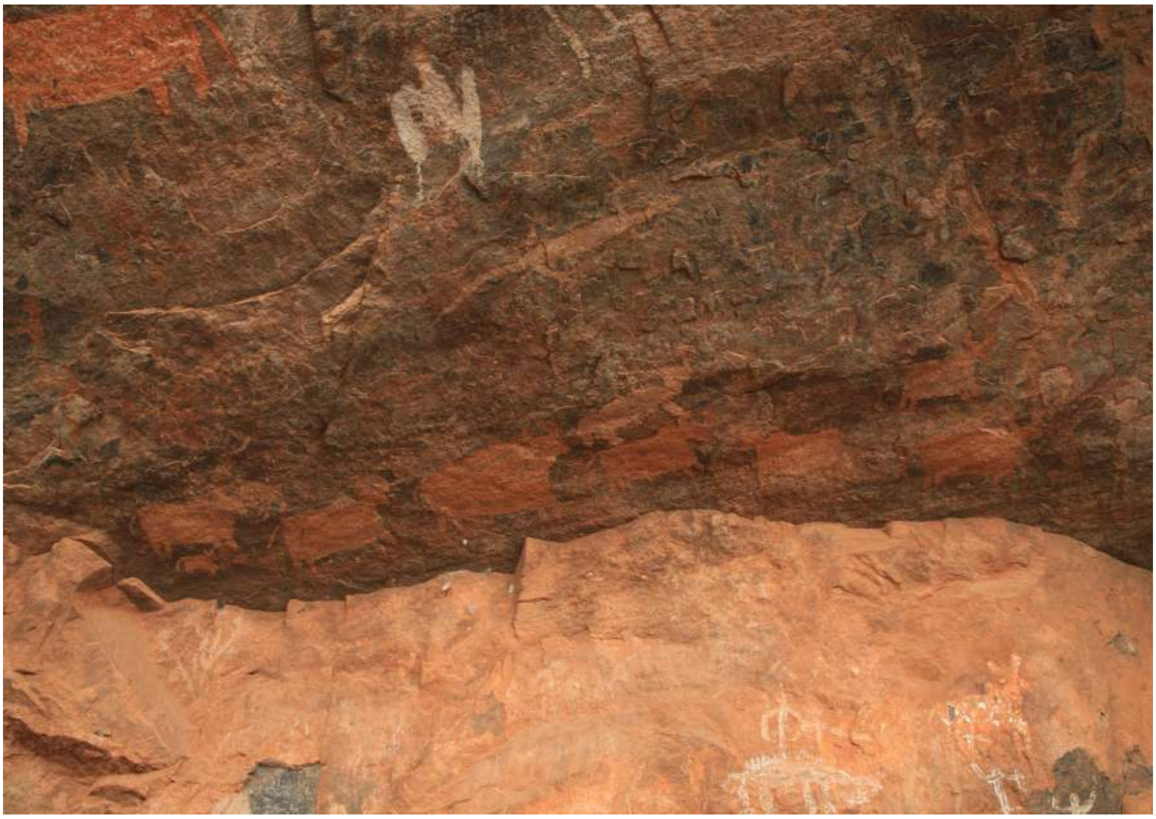


Fig. 4.1.32a Two groups of cattle

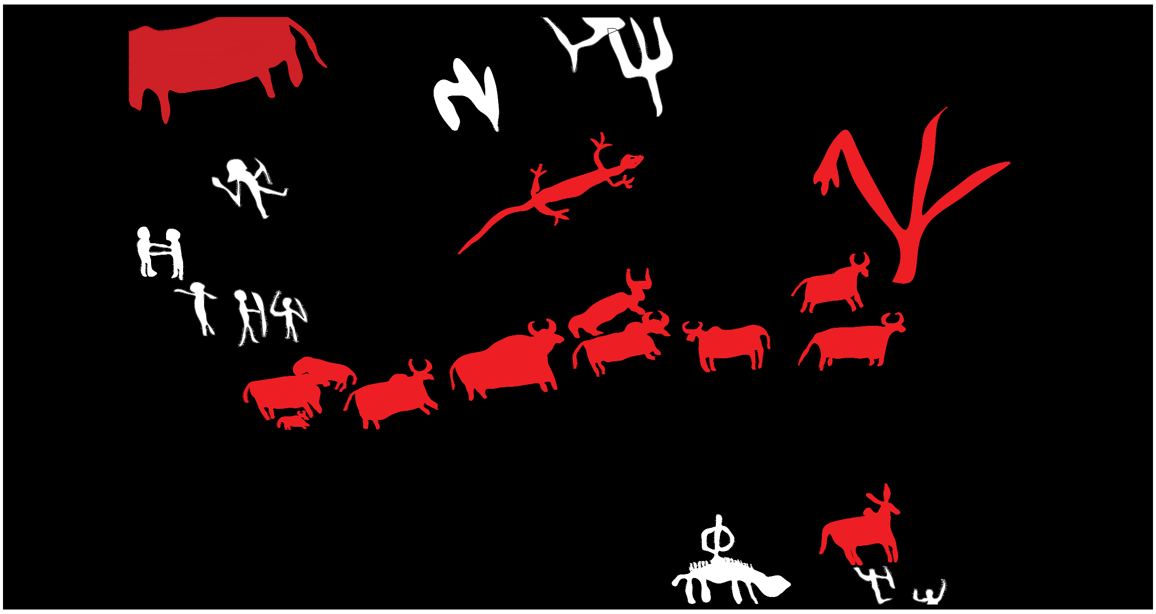
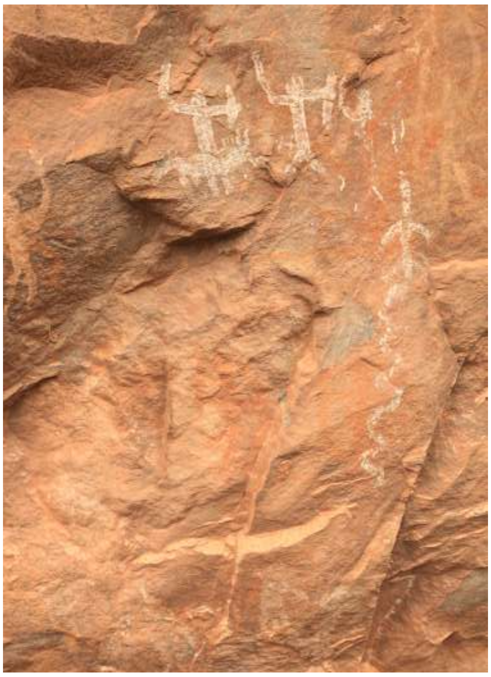


Fig. 4.1.32b Two groups of cattle

Two groups of cattle are depicted in the panel (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-8). At the top, 11 cattle are shown in a moving posture. A few cattle have horns, some are without. Few are with their calf. The second group of cattle is shown below appears to be part of a hunting scene between two groups. A few of them are mounted on animals holding weapons of sword and shield and some are in a standing position with weapons in their hands. The two groups are facing each other (Figs.4.1.32a and 4.1.32b).



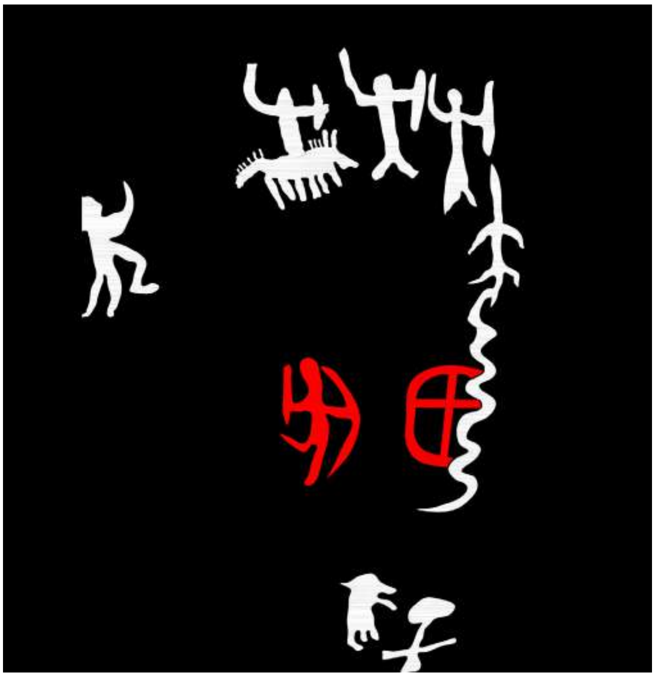
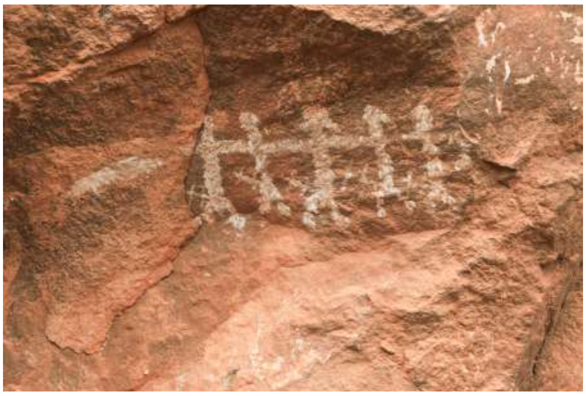


Fig. 4.1.33a *Hunter with unidentified sign*

Fig. 4.1.33b *Hunter with unidentified sign*

Humans with a raised hand holding swords and shields are depicted in red and white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-9). Three humans are painted in white along with one snake-like image below the group. These human figures are shown with swords and shields in their hands. One human mounted on a cattle holds weapons in raised hands. The head of the animal is facing down and the neck and tail portions have hairs. One snake is drawn vertically with zig-zack/wavy lines (Figs.4.1.33a and .1.33b).



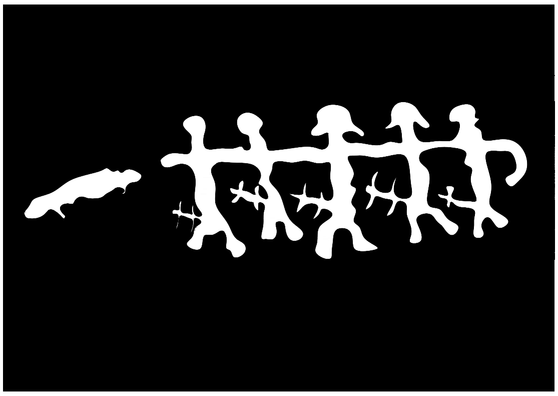


Fig. 4.1.34a Celebration scene

Fig. 4.1.34b Celebration scene

A dancing scene representing a celebration is depicted in white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-10). A group of five persons is drawn holding each other. The head is in round shape, with thick vertical line used for the body and legs. Everybody has a weapon tucked at their waist (Figs.4.1.34a and 4.1.34b).

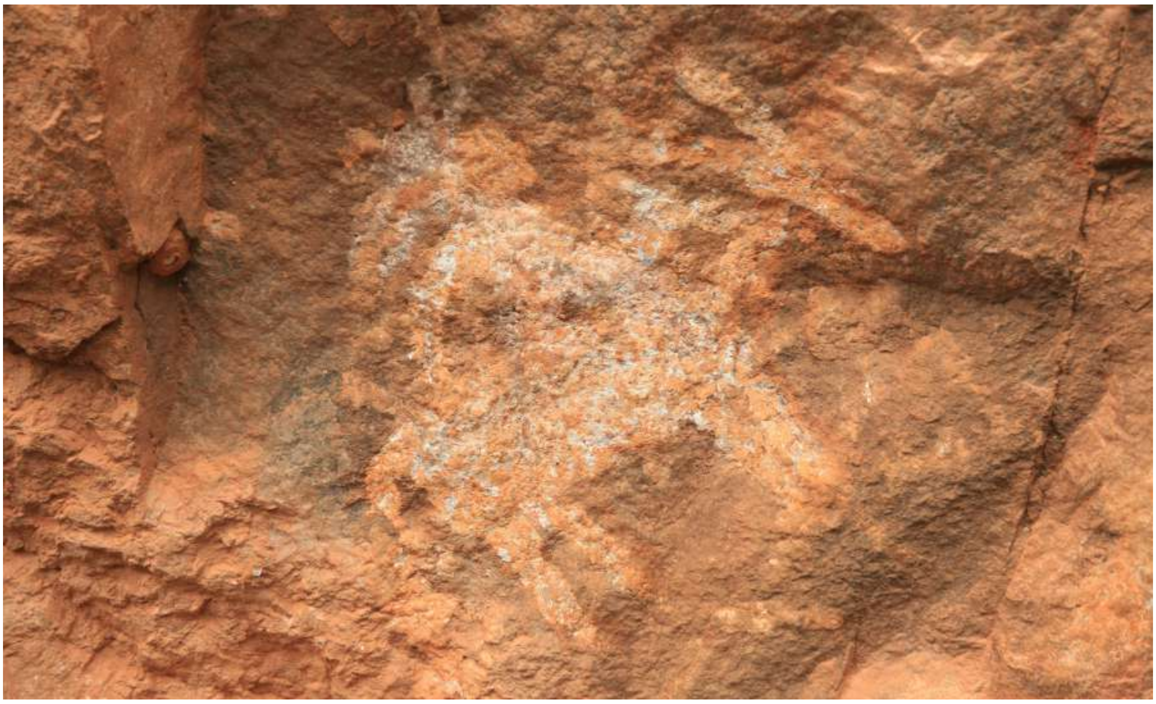


Fig. 4.1.35a A rider

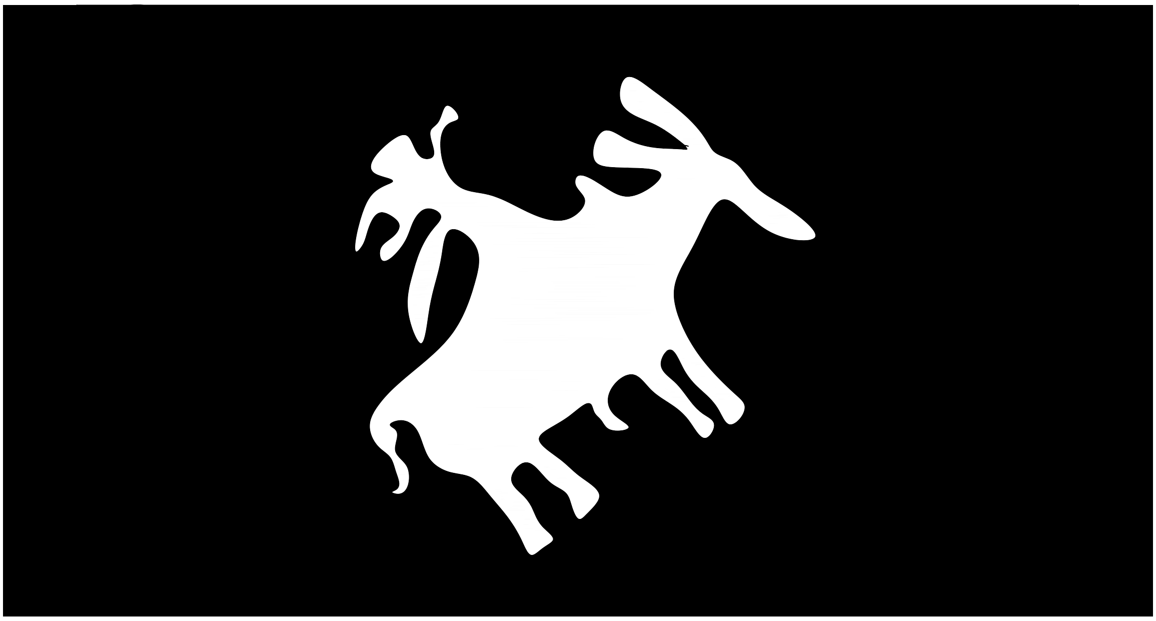


Fig. 4.1.35b A rider

A rider is depicted in white colour (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-11). The hunter is seated on an animal. The image is not very clear. The human figure is wearing a crown and the right hand holds a weapon and the left hand holds a rope tied to the animal. The animal face is shown with a structure of conical shape with straight vertical horns along with four long legs and a long tail (Figs.4.1.35a and 4.1.35b).

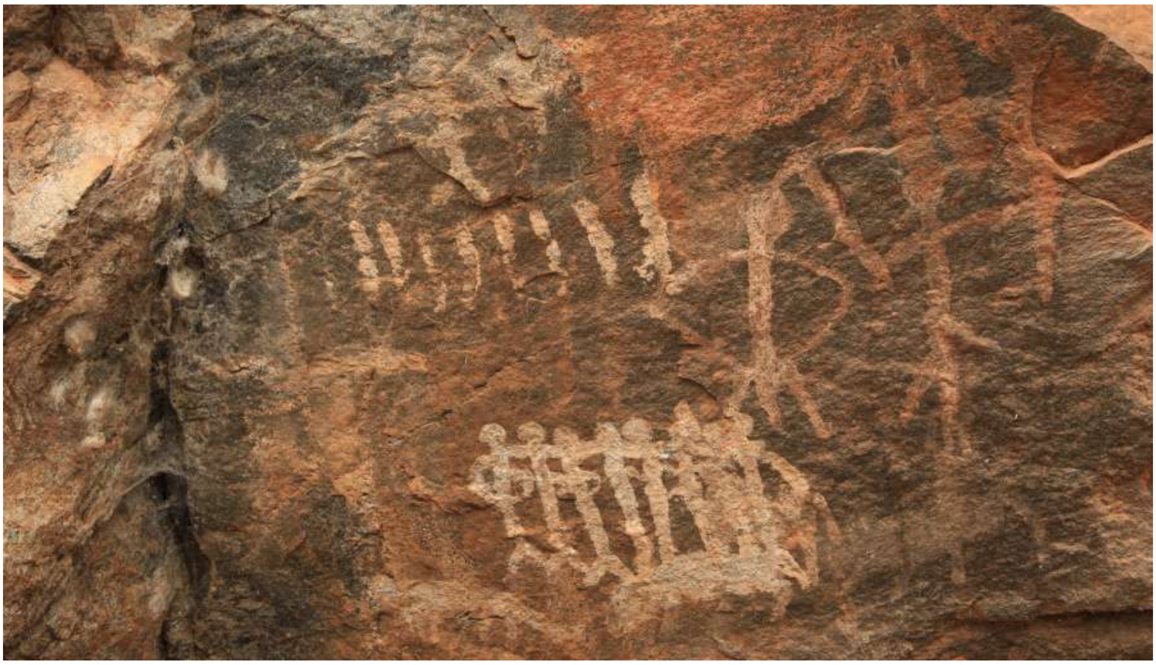


Fig. 4.1.36a Dancing scene

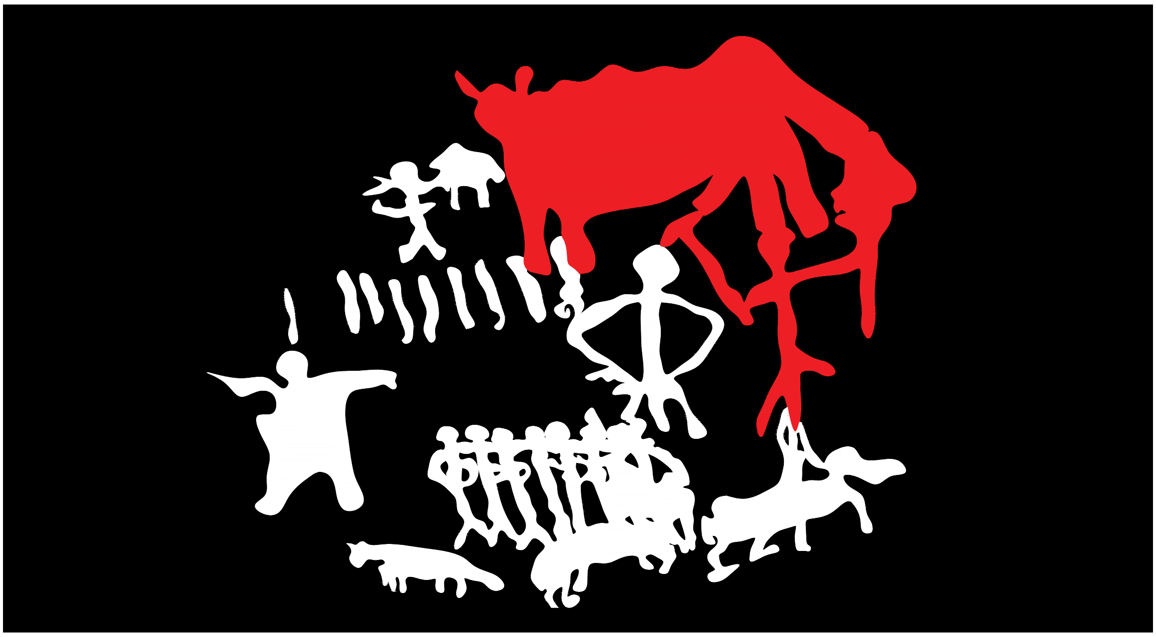


Fig. 4.1.36b Dancing scene

A dancing scene is depicted in red and white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-12). The panel of painting is represented by many human figures and is in groups. A huge animal is represented at the top and below this, two groups of people are standing in a row representing a dance probably after a good hunt. Eight human figures are standing next to each other by placing their hands on the shoulders of another person. Round head with hands are in curved posture. The body portion is depicted in elongated thick line and has short legs. All are standing on a platform. The right side has a depiction of three human figures in bigger size, they are with round head. The hands are curved and placed on his waist. One figure holds a long L-shaped weapon (Figs.4.1.36a and 4.1.36b).

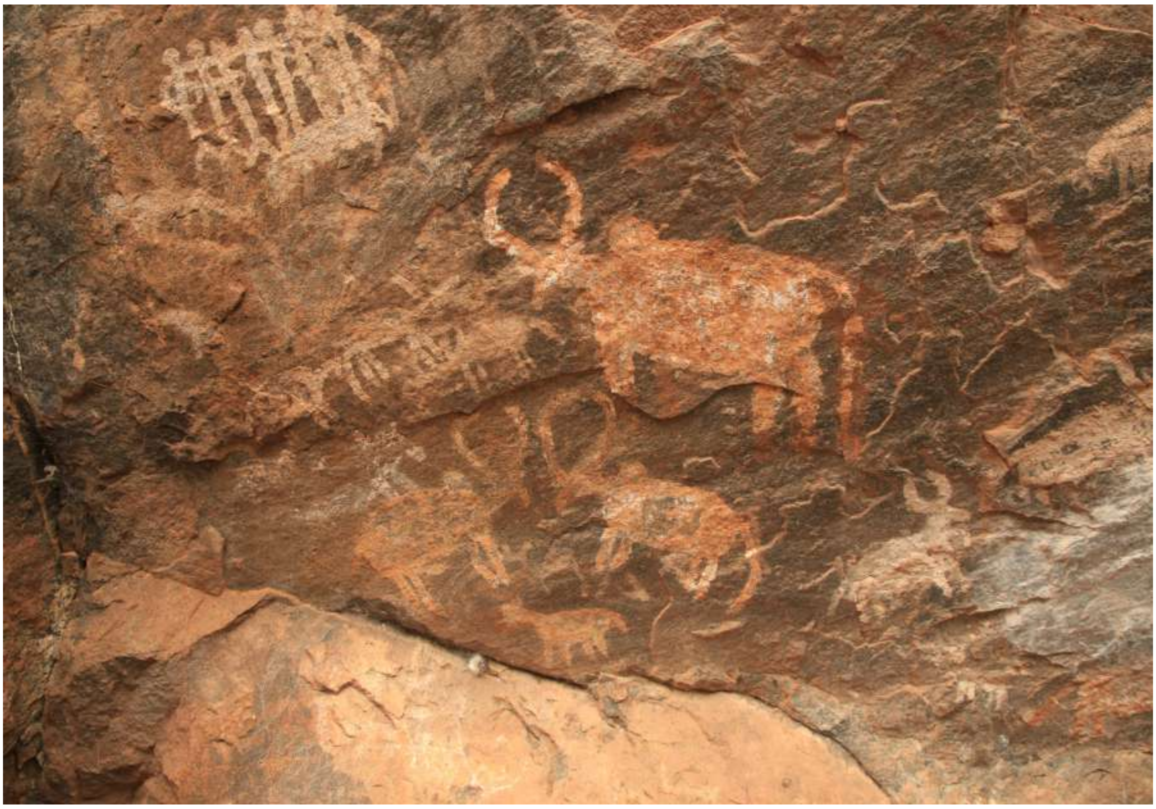


Fig. 4.1.37a Celebration scene with cattle

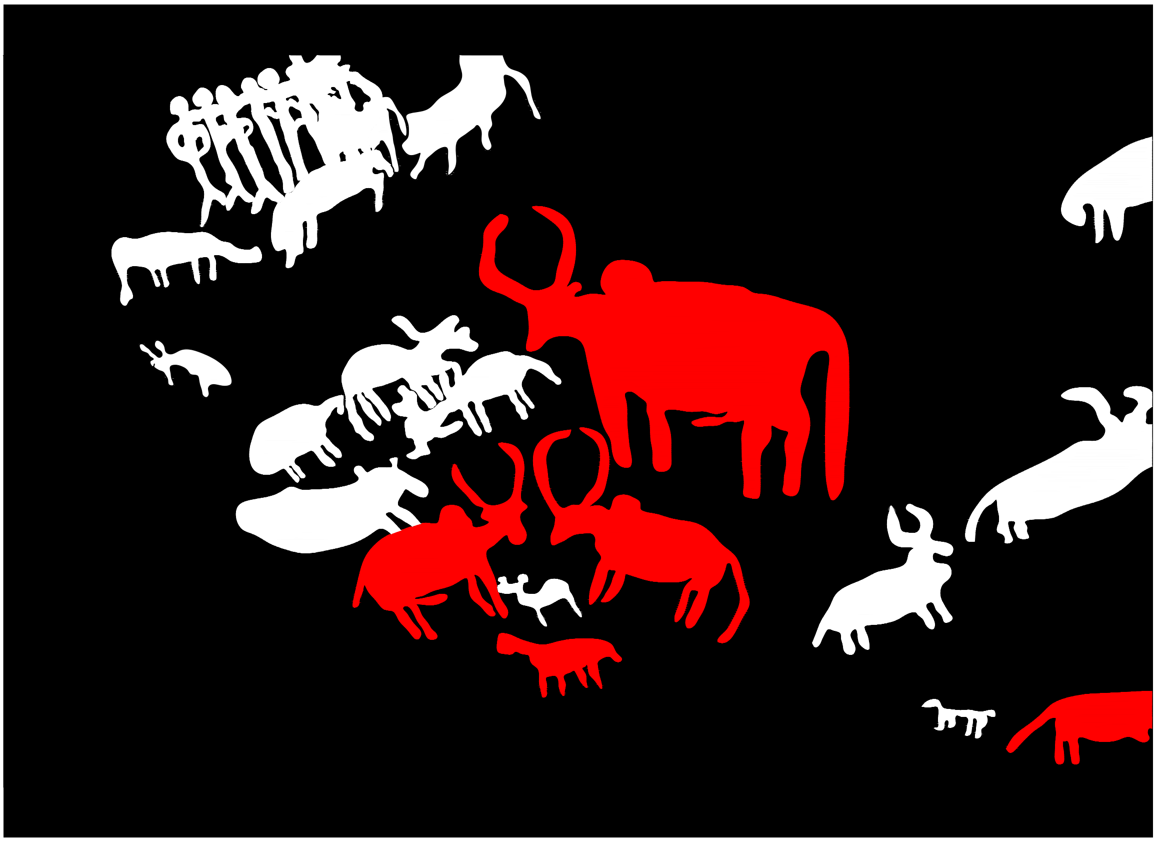


Fig. 4.1.37b Celebration scene with cattle

A group of bulls is depicted in red and white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-13). Eight people holding each other are shown above the group of cattle. The animals are clearly depicted. The cattle have long and curved horns and a hump with a muscular body, legs and long tail (Figs.4.1.37a and 4.1.37b).

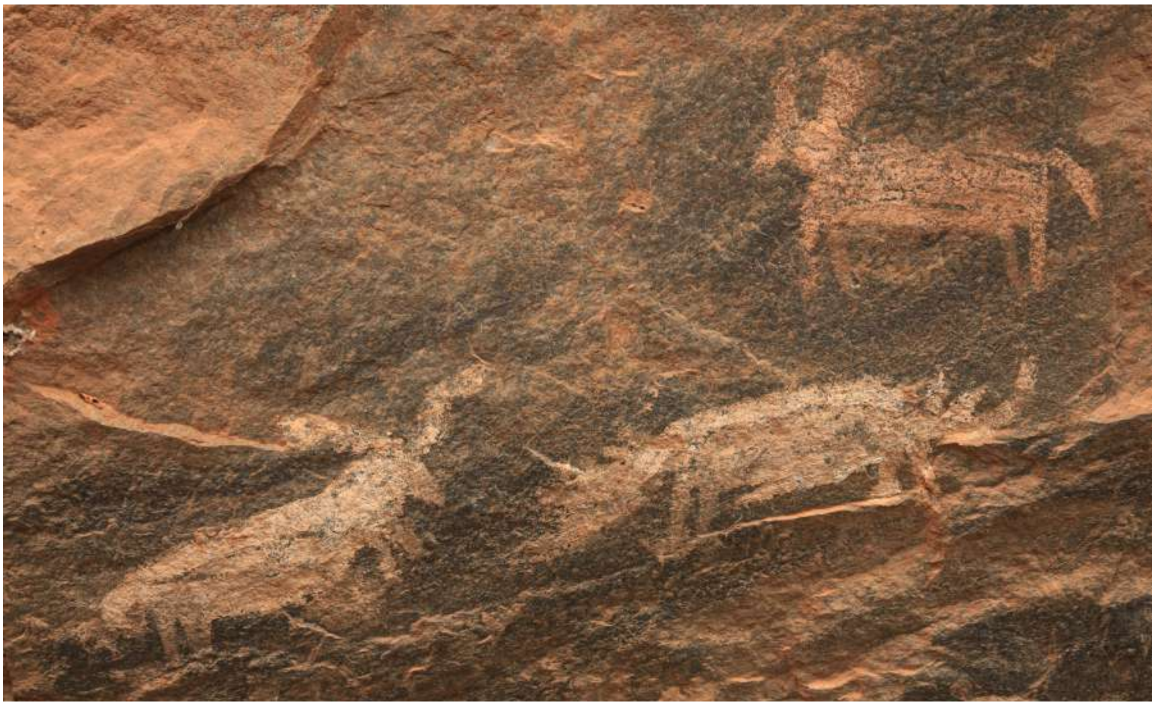


Fig. 4.1.38a Cattle

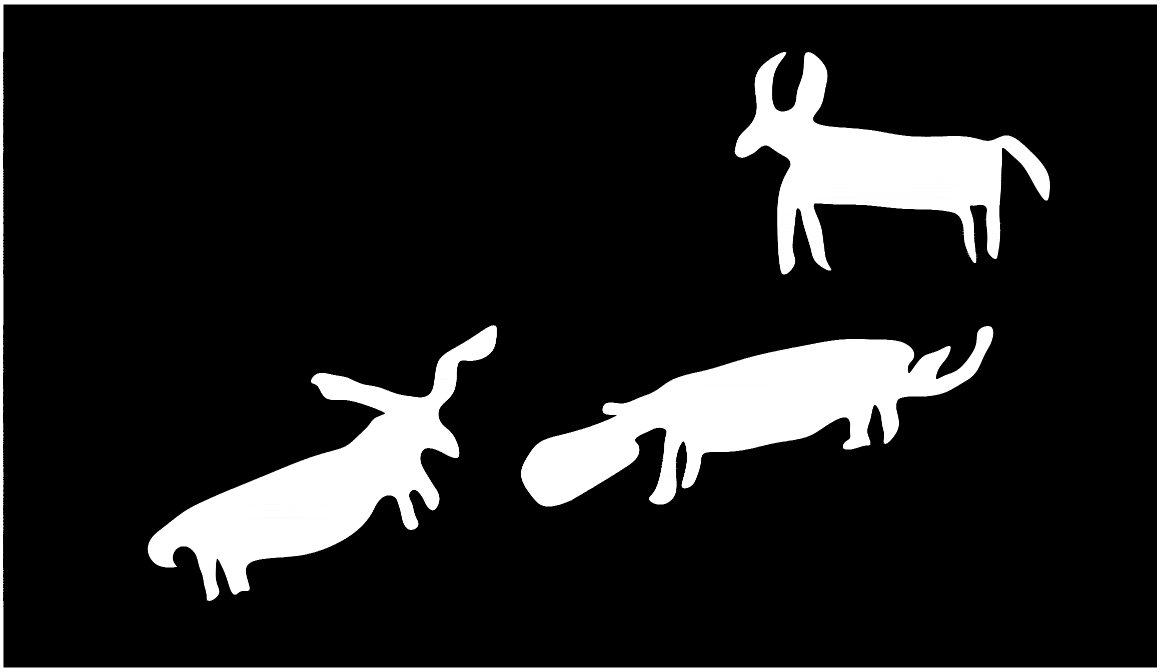


Fig. 4.1.38b Cattle

with a conical-shaped face with large horns and a small tail. The middle one is shown with a bent head. The third one facing left drawn above the two animals is anatomically in perfect shape (Figs.4.1.38a and 4.1.38b).

The cattle are depicted in white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-14). Three different animal figures are drawn in this panel. The animal on the right is drawn in red with two horns and a small tail. The other two facing each other are drawn in white. The animal on the left is depicted

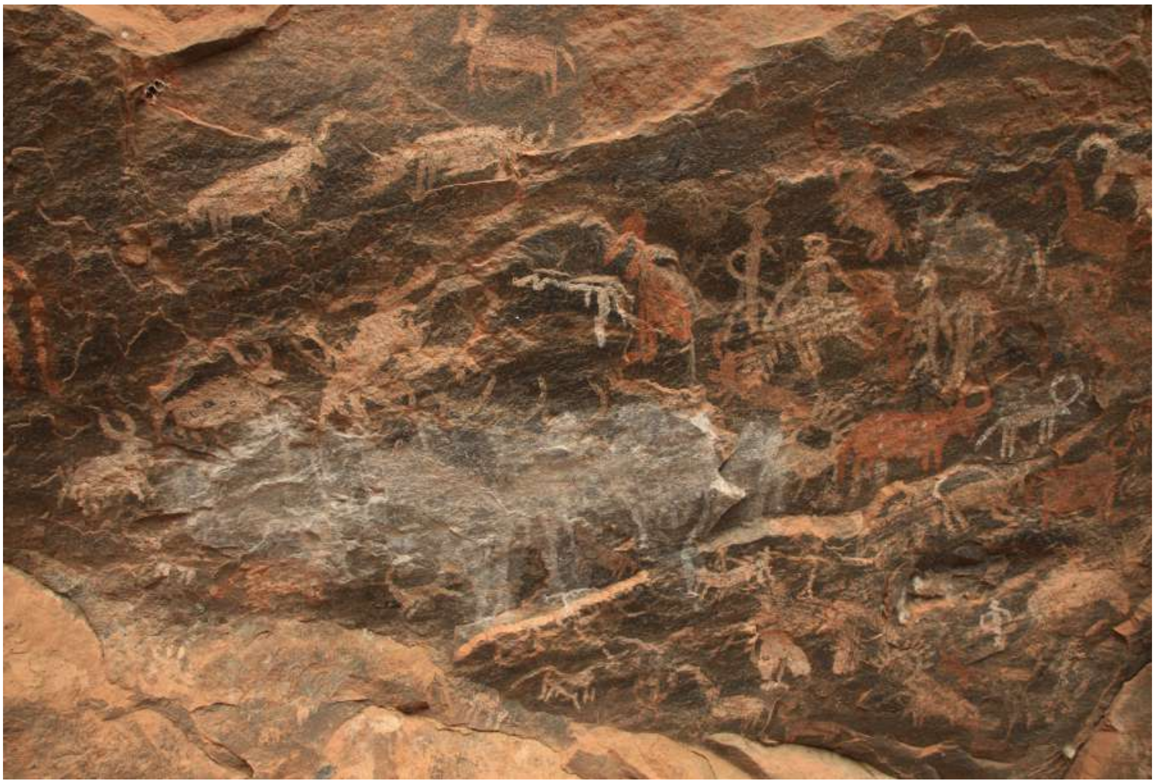


Fig. 4.1.39a A herd

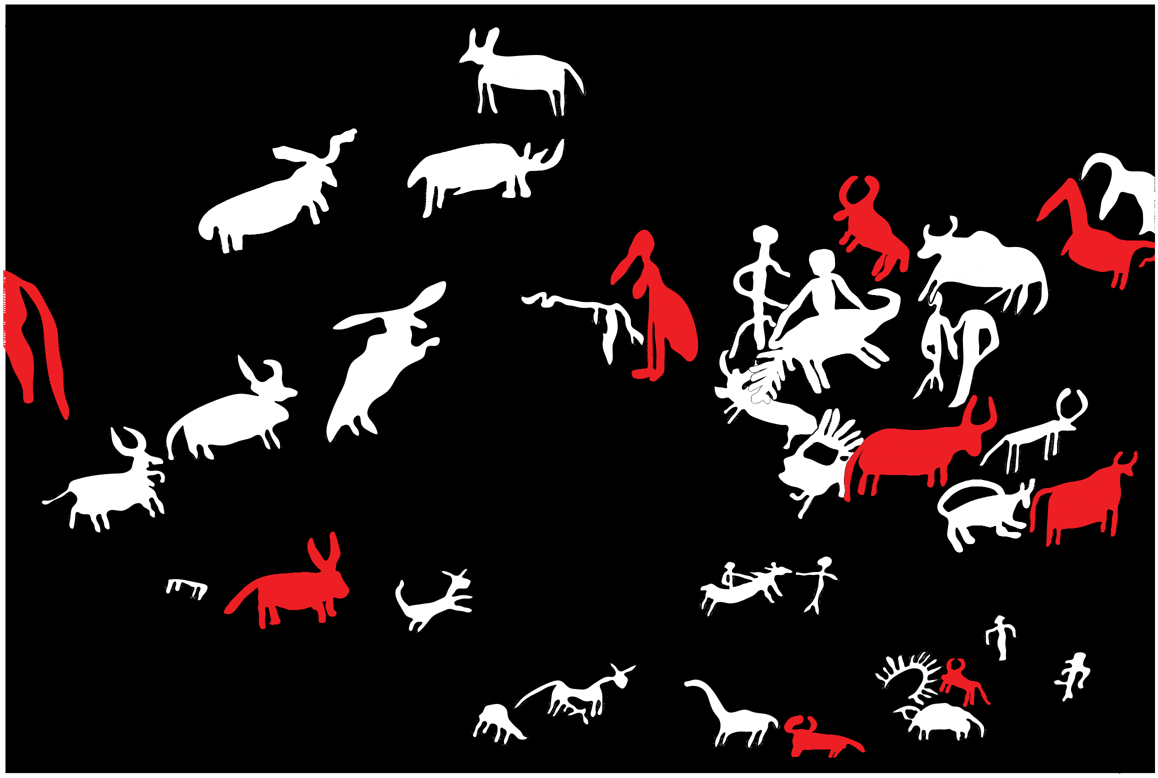


Fig. 4.1.39b A herd

Cattle gathering scene is depicted in red and white (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-15). In this panel, a herd representing many animals are shown along with human figures. The entire representations suggest they were grazing animals (Figs.4.1.39a and 4.1.39b).

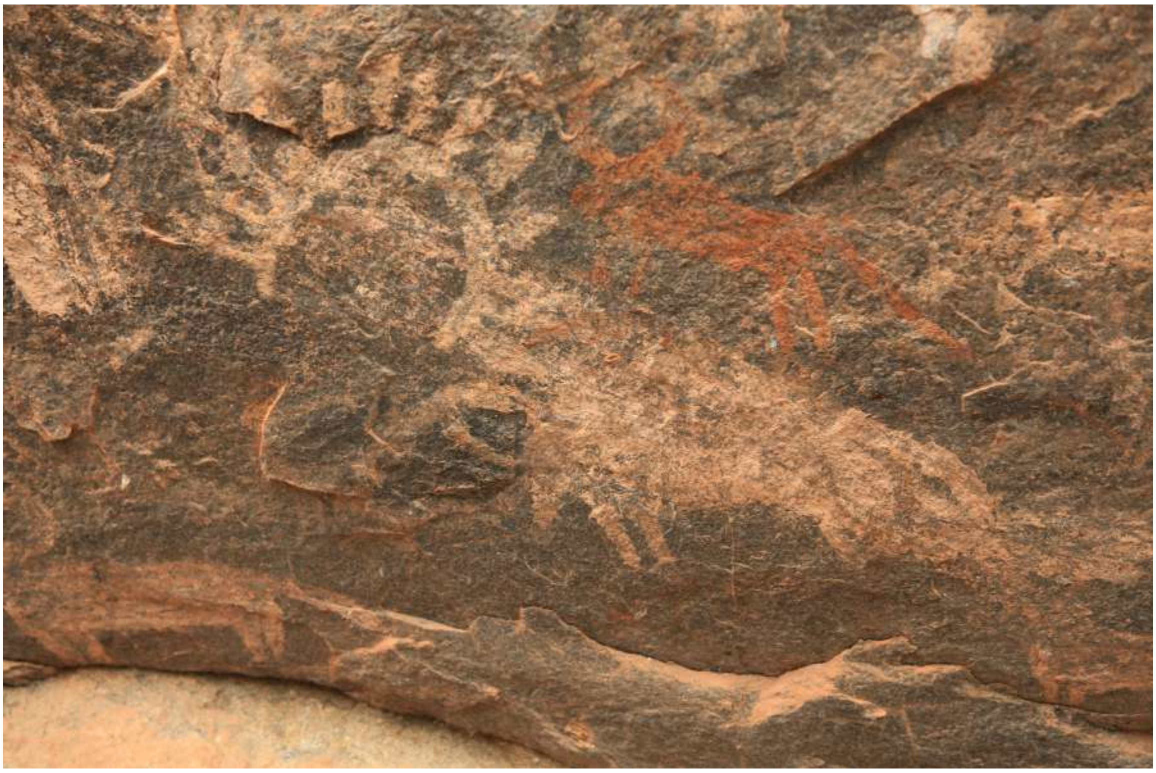


Fig. 4.1.40a Animal with sun sign

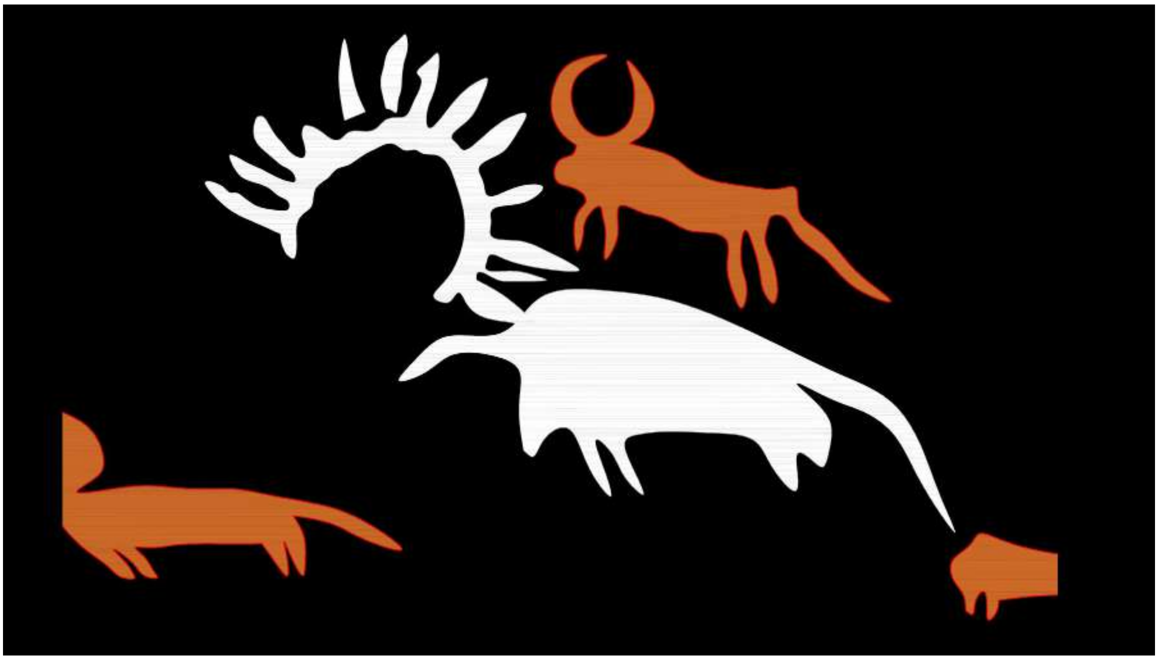


Fig. 4.1.40b Animal with sun sign

Two animals one in white and another in red are shown standing in front of a sun like symbol (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-16) (Figs.4.1.40a and 4.1.40b).

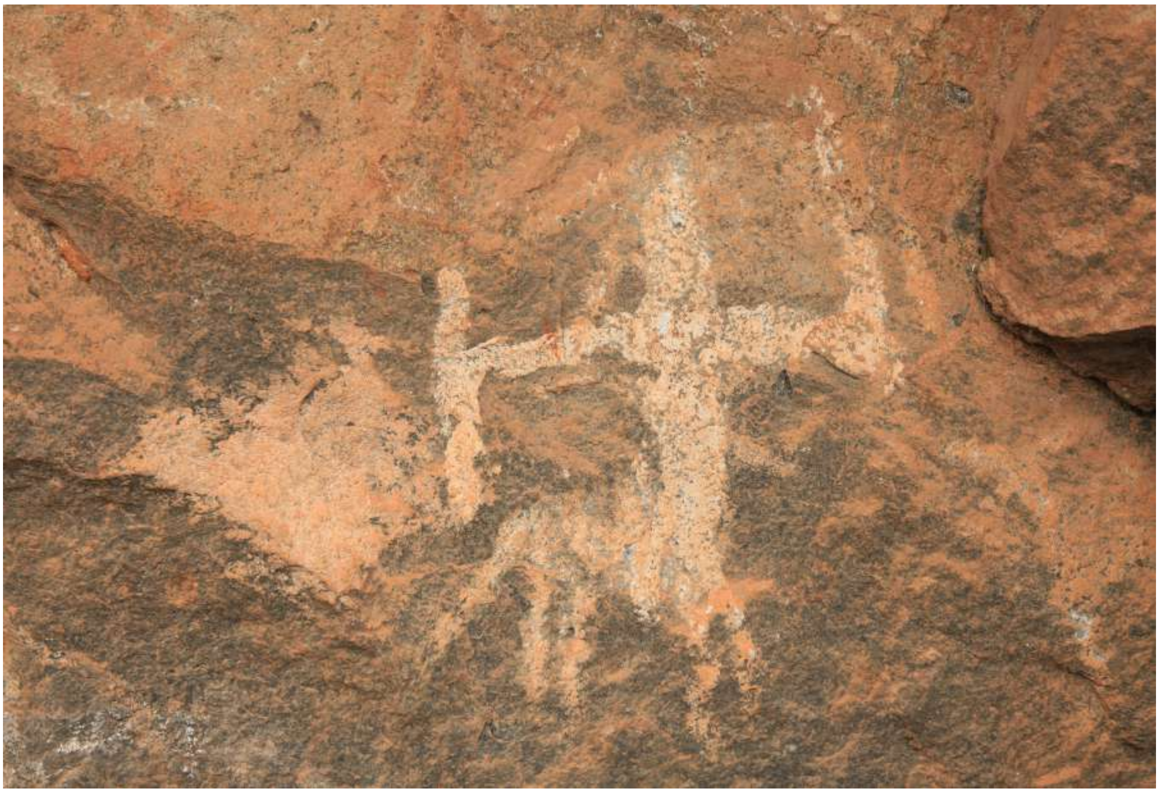


Fig. 4.1.41a Human

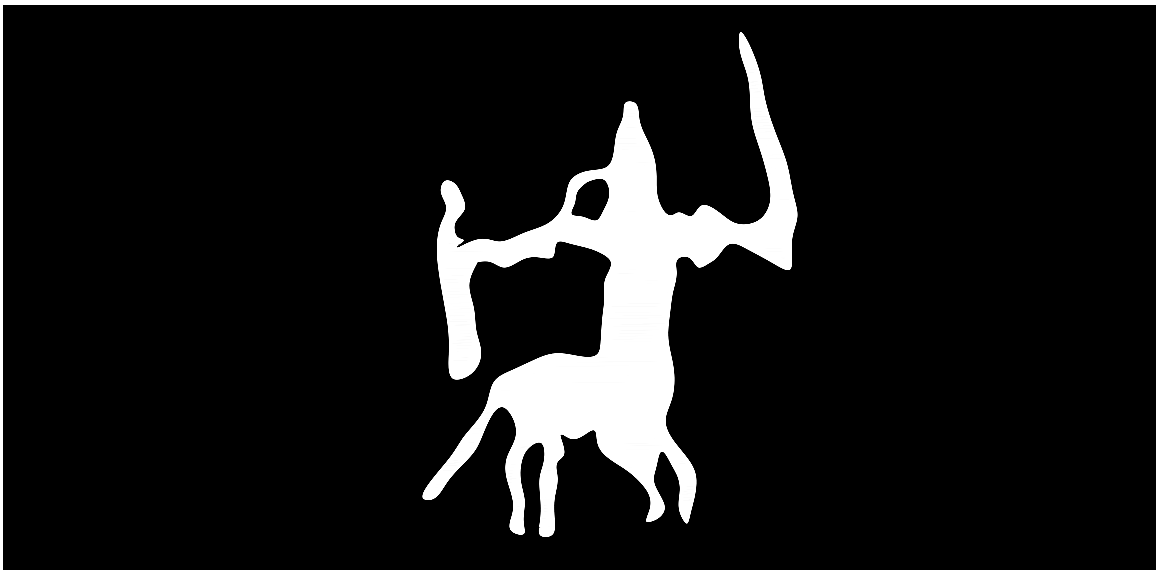


Fig. 4.1.41b Human

A human riding a long-tailed animal with weapons in both hands is shown in white. The body of the human with stretched hands is raised from the head of the animal and it looks like a zoo-anthropomorphic (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-17). (Figs.4.1.41a and 4.141b).

There are five cattle imageries. The first two are at the top facing left. The other three are shown below but facing right. Among the three, the body of the two cattle were filled with parallel vertical lines. Behind these are human figures (Zone-2&:4 Cluster-18). The bull has straight horns, short neck and muscular body with a hump (Figs.4.1.42a, and 4.1.42b)

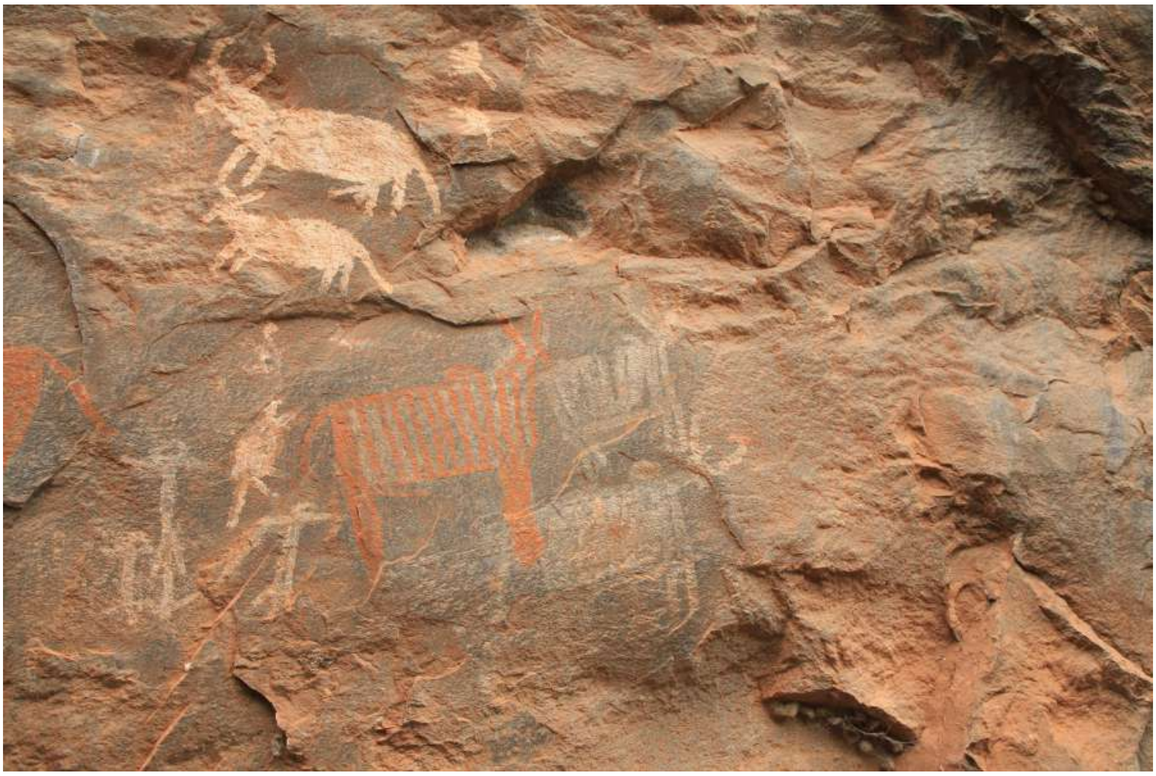


Fig. 4.1.42a A herd

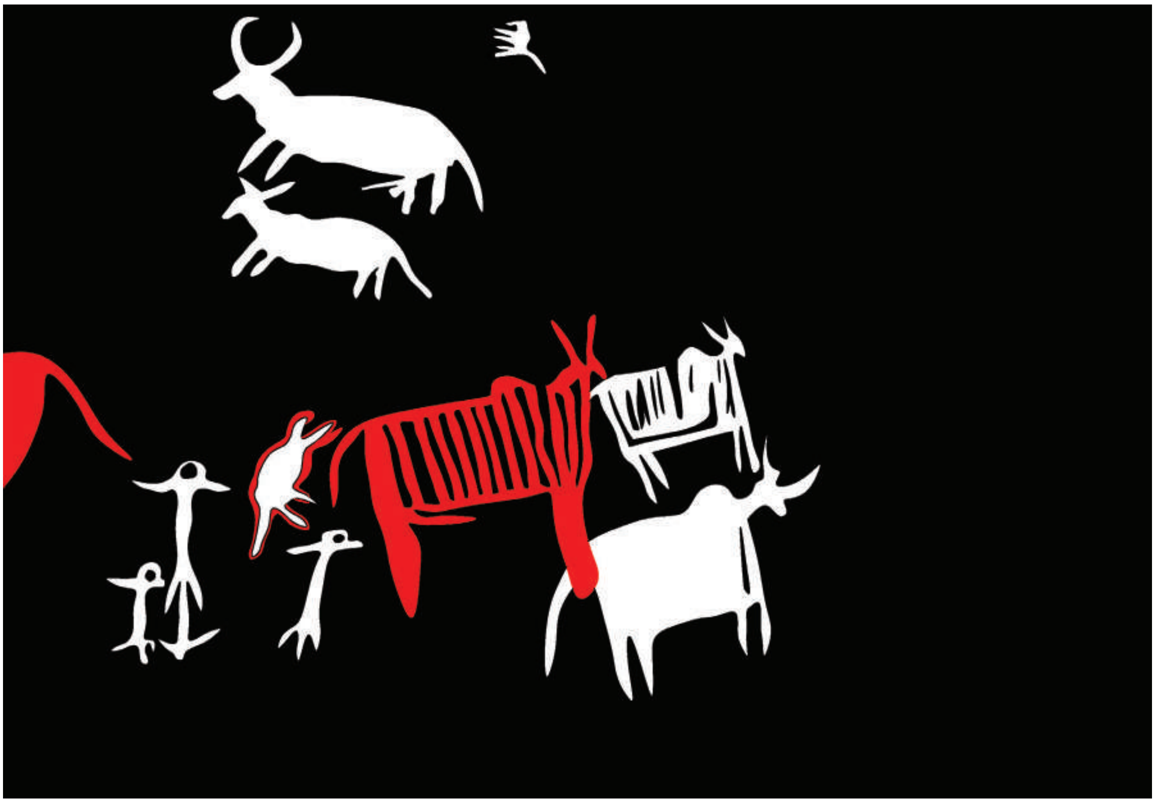
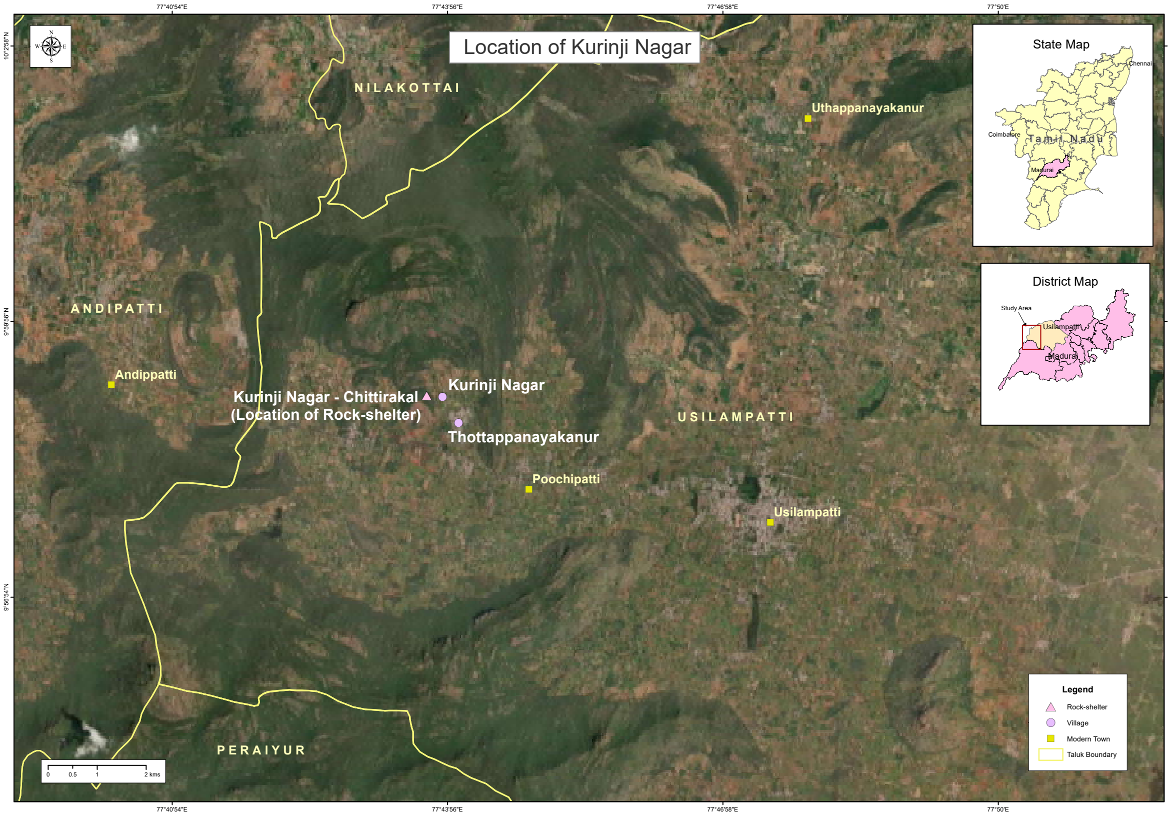


Fig. 4.1.42b A herd

Madurai District

4.2 Kurinji Nagar

Kurinji Nagar (9.98029 N; 77.73423 E) is a small village/hamlet in Usilampatti Block in the Madurai district of Tamil Nadu. It comes under Thottappanaickanur Panchayath. The rock art site Chittirakal-pudavu meaning rock-shelter having painting lies 4 km southwest of Kurinji Nagar, which lies 12 km from Usilampatti, a major town situated on the Madurai – Teni road. To reach the site, one has to take a diversion at T. Chettipatti located on the Usilampatti-Teni main road (Map 4.2.1-4.2.2). The hamlet of a Paliyar community attached Kurinji Nagar lies 4 km from T. Chettipatti. One has to take foot path through the forest from Kurinji Nagar for about 2.5 km to reach the rock shelter called Chittrakal-pudavu. It is located on the way to Vasimalaiyan temple. There is a perennial pond called more-uththu (perennial pond of buttermilk) close to the rock-shelter.


Location of Kurinji Nagar
NILAKOTTAI
ANDIPATTI
USILAMPATTI
PERAIYUR
Uthappanayakanur
Andippatti
Kurinji Nagar - Chittirakal
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Kurinji Nagar
Thottappanayakanur
Poochipatti
Usilampatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Coimbatore
Madurai
District Map
Study Area
Usilampatti
Madurai
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
0 0.5 1 2 kms
77°40'54"E
77°43'56"E
77°46'58"E
77°50'E

Map 4.10.2 Location of Kurinji Nagar

The rock-shelter over -looking the village had paintings executed at two levels. There is a huge boulder detached from the upper surface of the shelter lying in front of the rock-shelter. This stone block in fact covers nearly half portion of the front entrance or portico of the rock shelter. However, there is a considerable gap between the surface of the rock-shelter and the stone block leaving an enough space to accommodate people or to perform rituals (Figs. 4.2.1-4.2.3).

There are paintings which are prone to vandalism. The lower-level paintings are observed in the gap between the rock shelter and the stone block. The second level of the paintings was executed at higher level as one could stand on the detached boulder and execute painting. All the paintings are executed in white. The nature of the paintings suggests an age range of Iron Age to Early Historic.

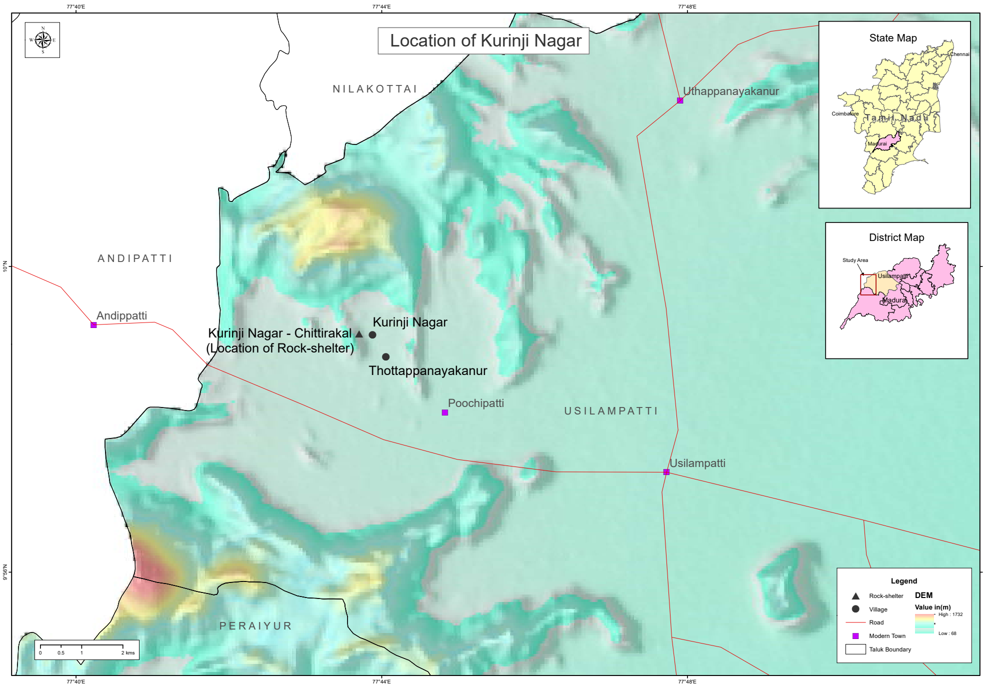
Till recent years the Paliyar community were living in the rock shelter. Now, the Paliyars are rehabilitated at Kurinji Nagar by the Government (Fig. 4.2.4). Even today, the Paliyar community worships the deity called Palichchi amman located close to the rock shelter.

Rock Shelter

The total length of the rock painted surface is about 6 m and the width is about 10 m and the total height is about 6.5 m. The total painted surface is about 5.3 m. The documentation was carried out from west to east and the columns and rows are divided as specified in the methodology.

The lower floor has space to accommodate about 20 people. The upper floor has a wider visibility probably used for surveillance. Both have paintings. Most of the paintings on the upper floor seem to be prehistoric and most of the paintings on the lower floor seem to have been made recently.

On the upper floor, there are more than 30 patches of paintings. But only a few of them are in good condition. The paintings are mostly linear paintings, however some of them are filled in the interior portions. The images of the animals were painted in realistic form. The paintings are often exquisitely created including various birds, animals and human figures.


Location of Kurinji Nagar
NILAKOTTAI
ANDIPATTI
Andippatti
Kurinji Nagar - Chittirakal
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Kurinji Nagar
Thottappanayakanur
Poochipatti
USILAMPATTI
Usilampatti
Uthappanayakanur
PERAIYUR
State Map
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Road
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)

Map 4.2.2 Location of Kurinji Nagar

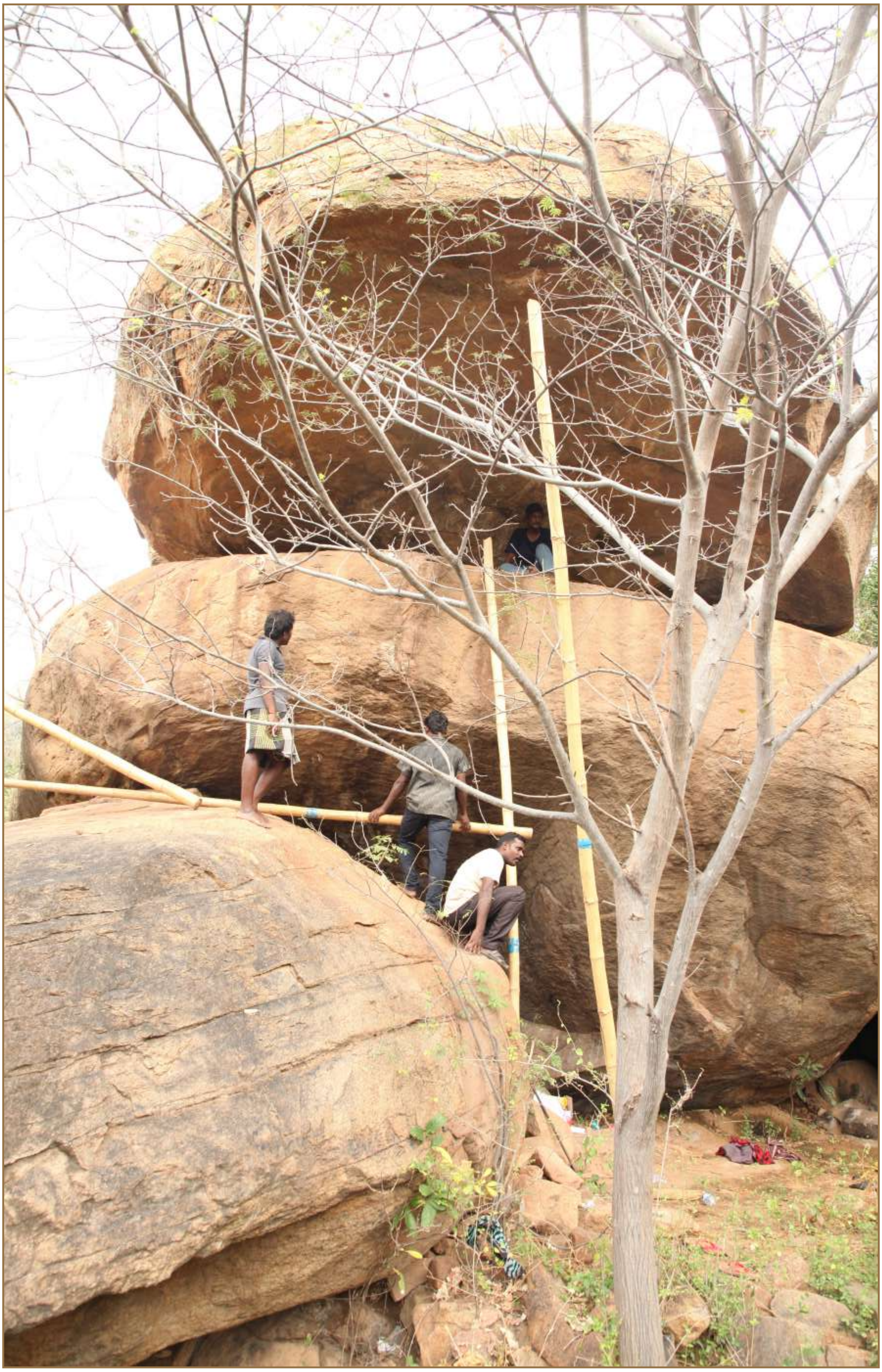


Fig. 4.2.1 General view of the shelter

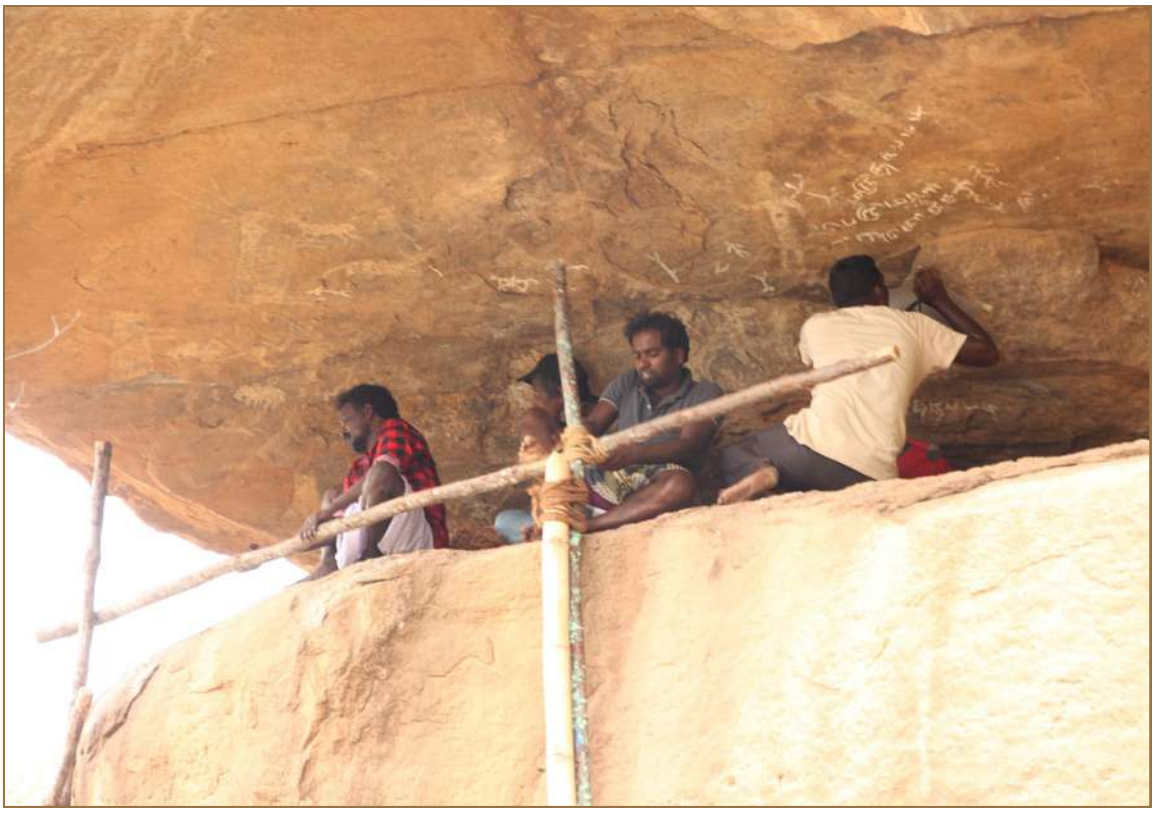


Fig. 4.2.2 General view of the shelter

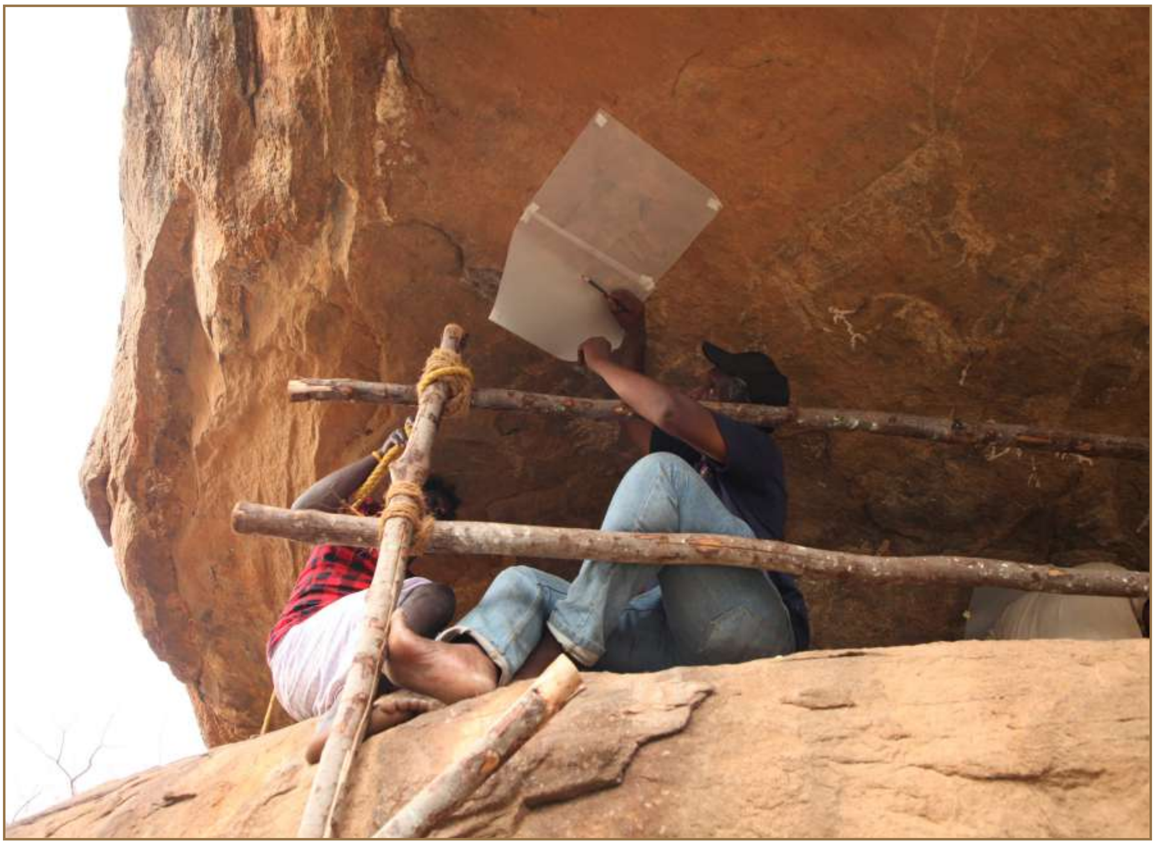


Fig. 4.2.3 General view of the shelter

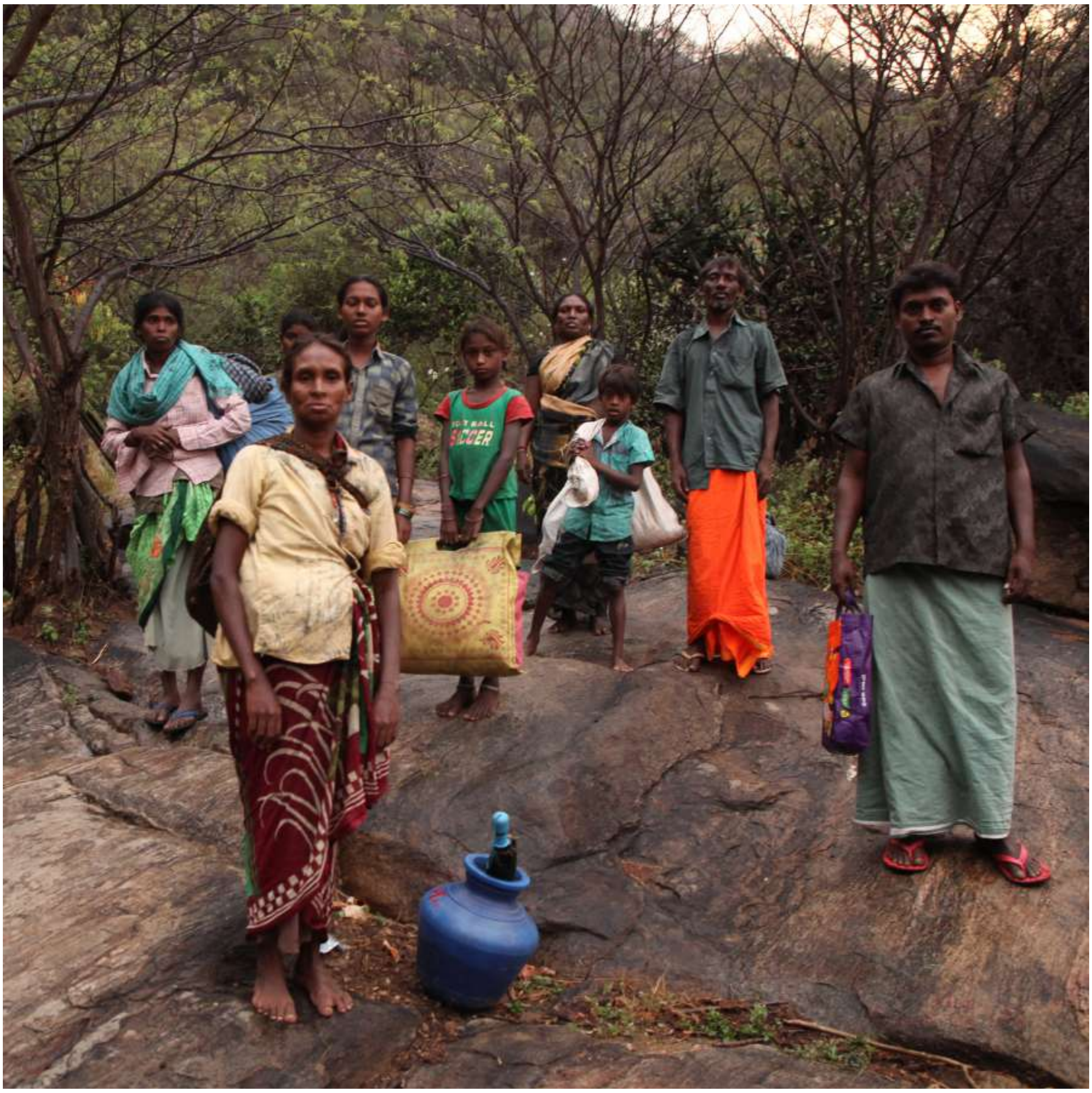


Fig. 4.2.4 *Paliya community*

Panel Descriptions

Elephant Hunting Scene

In this group of paintings, an elephant is shown in white occupying the centre part of the group. The hunters are shown encircling the elephant in an attacking posture (Figs. 4.2.5a-4.2.5b). It is a usual phenomenon. Generally, the tribes do not kill the elephant or hunt the elephant but they tame the elephant. From the context, one could presume that they are in mood of controlling the elephant. This action could be taken in either way. Apart from this, elephants are trained for other tasks too. The concept of killing an elephant for the purpose of ivory is of recent phenomenon. Based on the observation of the scene painted here, one may conclude that they are trying to catch or tame the elephant as the hunters were not holding any weapons that could kill the elephant. This scene reflects the possible method of catching or hunting elephants in prehistoric times.

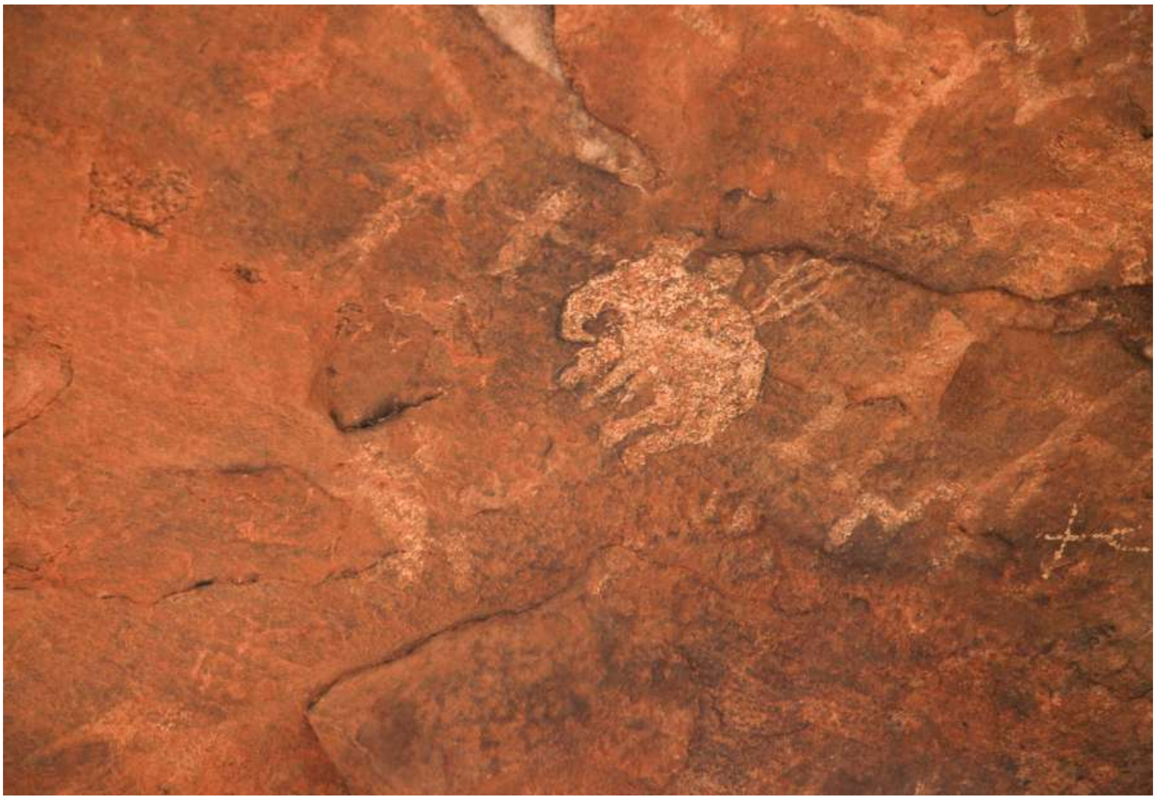


Fig. 4.2.5a Elephant hunting

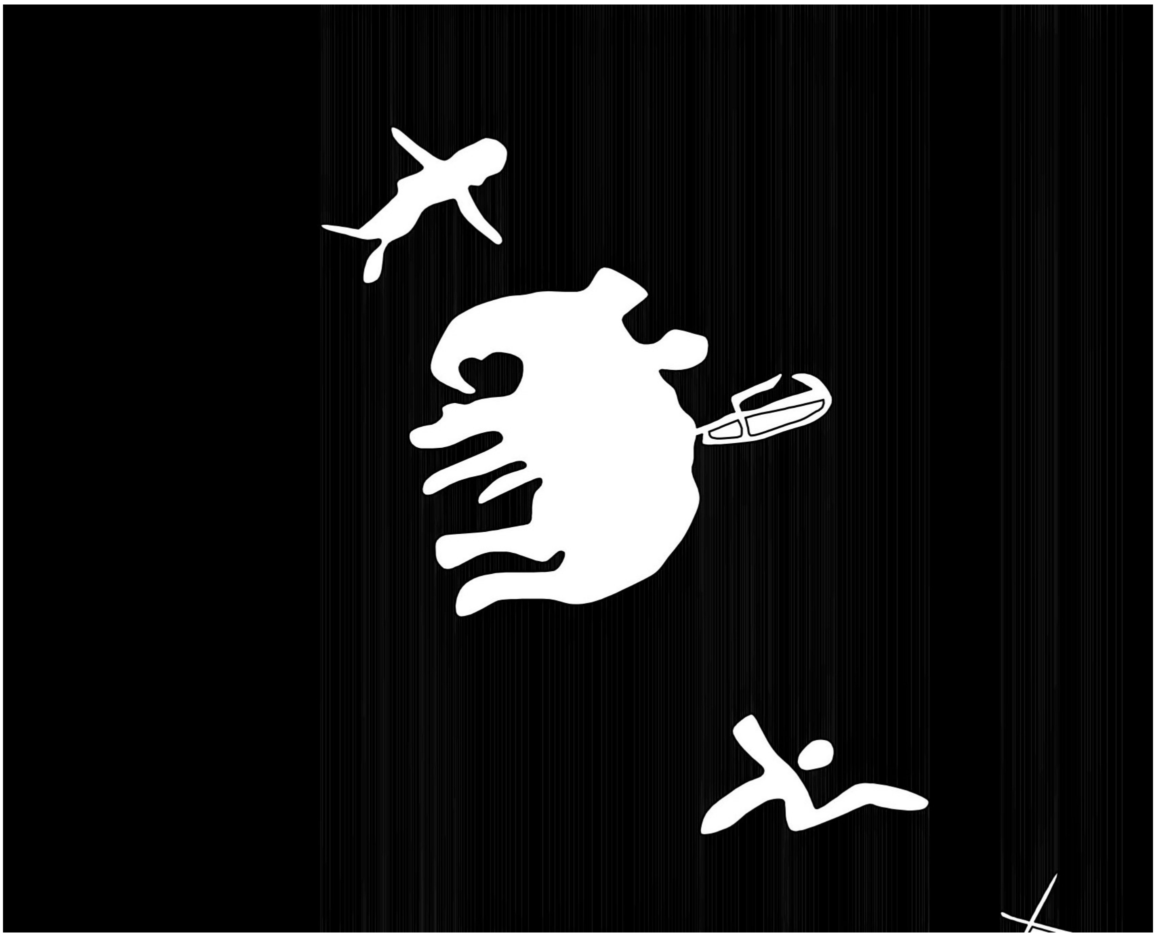


Fig. 4.2.5b Elephant hunting

The Elephant in the Literature

In the Sangam literature the elephant is mentioned more than 50 times in different names such as ma, velam, kari, sindhuram, aththi, arugu, ambal, aluval, ibam, immadi and kaimma. It refers to the usefulness of the domesticated elephants more than the use of wild elephants. Elephants were often bred in palaces and used to break down enemies forts and castles, to break down enemies guards, and to damage crops. The kings were also offered elephants as gifts.

Elephant Hunting

There are several references in Sangam literature on the method of catching/ trapping and utility of the elephant[1]. In Akananuru, the poet Mamulanar described about the scene of elephant family which was fallen into the deep dugout pit covered with foliage leaves. Mamulanar further says that Elini, the chief, will punish the people who were not hunting down the male elephant that fell with the cub and the female elephant.

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[1] பறைகண்டன்ன பாஅடி நோன்தாள்
துண்நிலை மருப்பின் வயக்களிறு வரிஞடிதாறும்
குழியிடைக்கொண்ட கன்றுடைப் பெருநிரை
பிடிபடுபூசலின் எய்தாது ஒழிய (அகம்-211)

மழைக்கணம் சேக்கும் மாமலைக்கிழவன்
வழைப்பூங் கண்ணி வாய்வாள் அண்டிரன்
குன்றம் பாடின கொல்லோ
களிறுமிக வுடைய இக்கவின் பெறுகாடே? (புறம் - 131)

அன்னல் யானை அடுகளத்து ஒலியிய
அருஞ்சமம் தயயிய நூறிநீ
பெருந்தகை விழுப்புண்பட்டமாறே (புறம் - 22)

பனை தடி புனத்தில் கைதடிப்பு பலவுடன்
யானை பட்ட வான் மயண்கு கடுந்தார் (பதிற்று- 36:5-6)

சங்க காலத்தில் யானைகளைப் பழக்கிப் பெரிய மரங்களை வெட்டியபின் துண்டுகளை எடுத்து வரப் பயன்படுத்தி இருக்கிறார்கள். விறகு கொண்டு வரும் யானை பற்றி மாப்பித்தியார்,

கழைக்கண நெடுவரை அருவியாடி
கான யானை தந்த விறகின்
கடுந்தெறல் செநதீ வேட்டுப்
புறம் தாழ் புரிசடை புலர்த்துவோனே (குறுந் - 59)
என்கிறார்

கைவேல் களிற்றொடு போக்கி வருபவன்
மெய்வேல் பறியா நகும்

Besides elephant hunting/catching, a deer with long horns is drawn as a linear pattern and then it is filled with white painting (Figs. 4.2.6a-4.2.6b). The figure of the deer is shown very elegantly and naturally. Near the deer, the human-like figure is indistinctly visible.

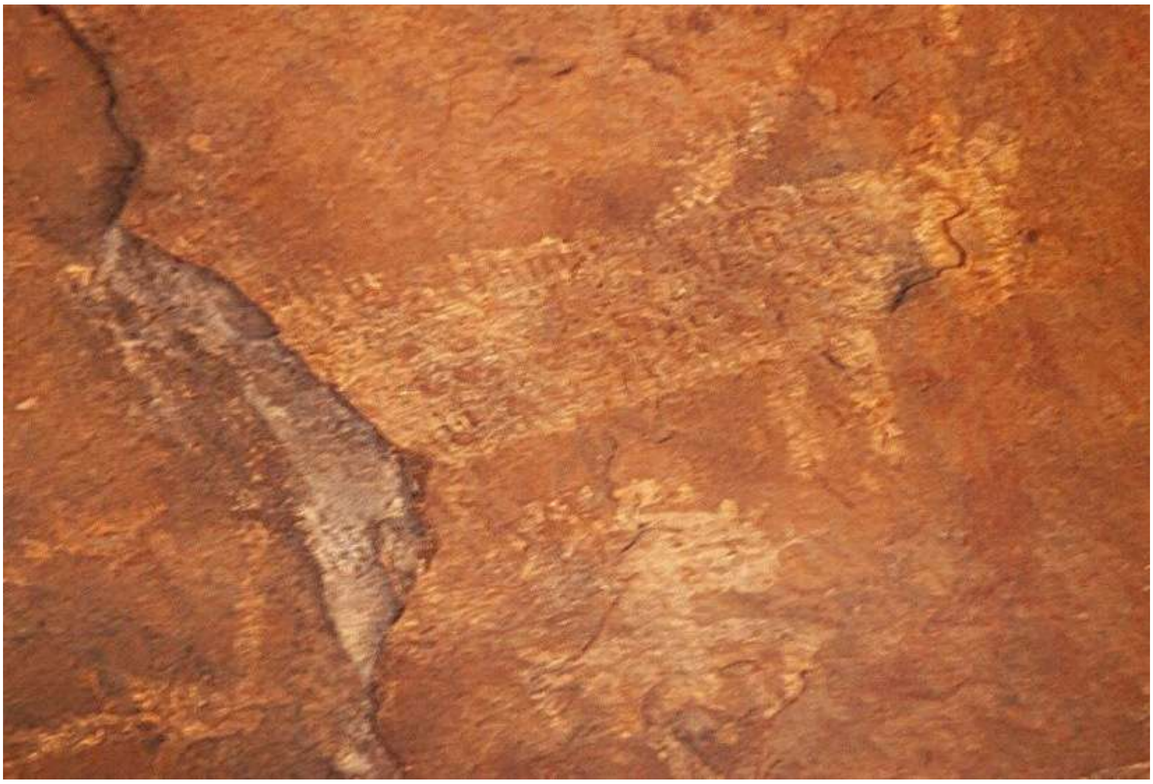


Fig. 4.2.6a Deer

கையில் ஏந்திய வேலை ஒரு யானையின் மேல் எறிந்து துரத்திவிட்டு, வேறு வேல் தேடி வருகின்றவன் தன் மார்பில் பட்டிருந்த வேலைக் கண்டு பறித்து மகிழ்கின்றான் என திருக்குறளில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது.

கானவர் மலைமேல் பரண் அமைத்துத் தினைப்புனம் காத்தனர். அப்போது, விளங்குகின்ற ஏந்தின கொம்பையுடையதும் தன் இனத்தைப் பிரிந்து வந்ததுமான யானை தினைப்புனத்தைத் தின்னும் பொருட்டு வந்தது. யானைத் தலைவனான அதனை வளைத்துப் பிடித்தற்காகக் கானவர் கூடிமுயன்றனர். அதனால் ஏற்பட்ட ஆரவாரம் கானகமெங்கும் எதிரொலித்தது.

விலங்கல் மீமிசைப் பணவை கானவர்
புலம்புக் குண்ணும் இலங்கேந்து மருப்பின்
இனம்பிரி ஒருத்தல் புரிவளை பூசல் என்று, மலைபடுகடாம் (277-99).

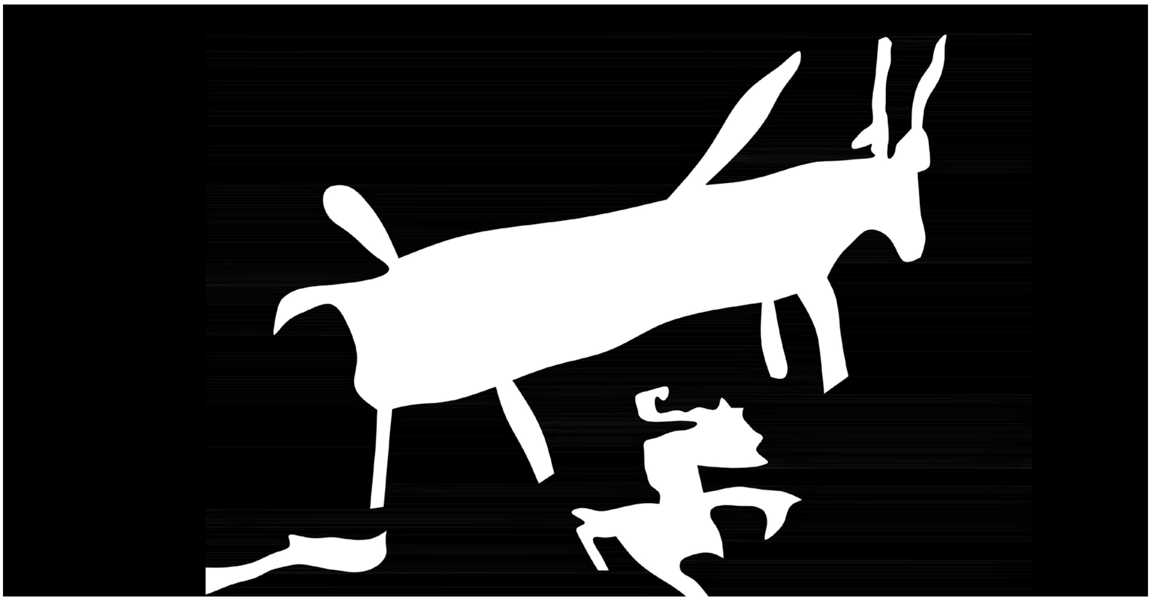


Fig. 4.2.6b Deer

It is a very rare scene to see a long-horned deer with its cub. It is one of the excellent depictions (Figs. 4.2.7a-4.2.7b). The mother deer is shown left to right and the baby deer is bottom-up near the front leg facing up close to the face of the mother deer. The artist has mastered the art of shaping images and manipulating scales as well. The figures are painted in linear pattern and then painted white inside. Some human figures are shown at the back and on the side of these deer. No weapons were found in their hands. The antlers of the deer are very delicate and drawn with firm lines. Other animals are shown near the deer.

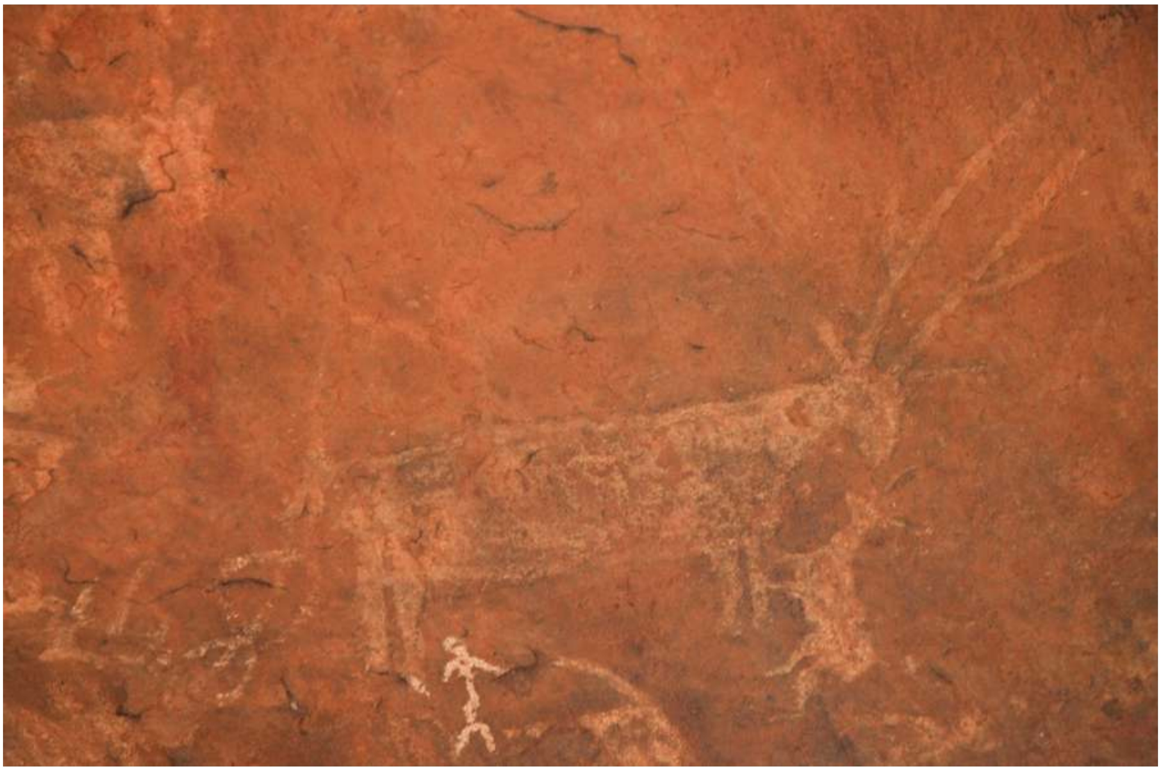


Fig. 4.2.7a Deer with fawn

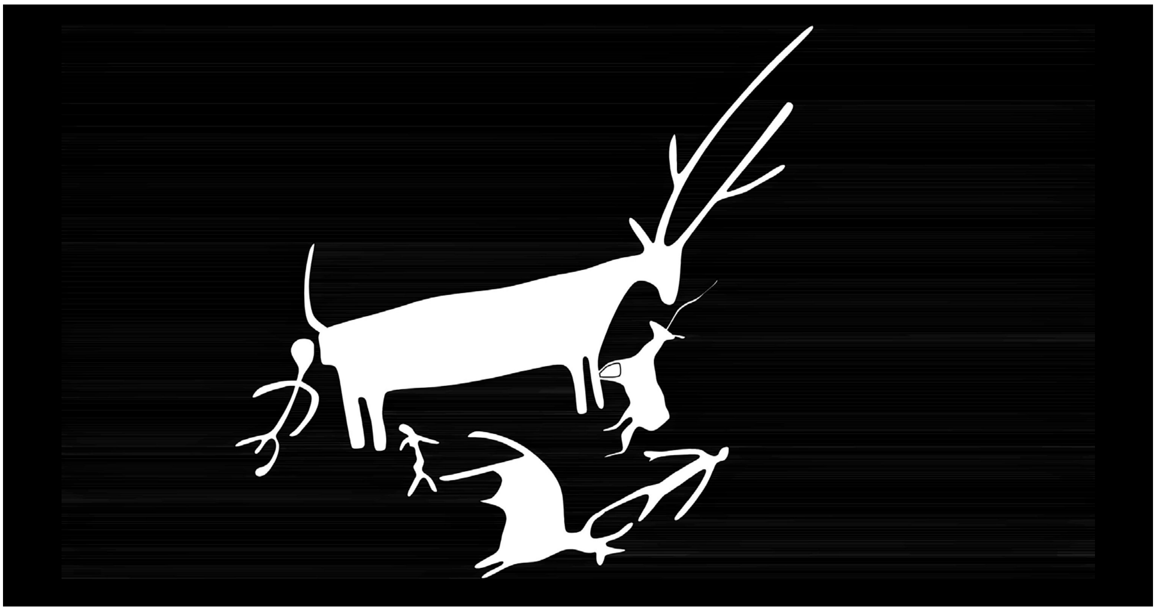


Fig. 4.2.7b Deer with fawn

In this group, the painting depicts an animal, a human and a bird all in one place. At the center, cattle are shown with a small hump which is white in colour (Figs. 4.2.8a-4.2.8b). A black colour is painted at the edges. The human figure, on the side of the cow, is shown with one hand resting on the waist and another in a raised posture as if to say something. Three birds are painted above the cow, two of them are small and one is large. These can be wild fowls or crane-type birds. The size and shape of the birds are elegantly drawn. Usually, the birds do not represent much in rock paintings but it is distinctibely depicted here.

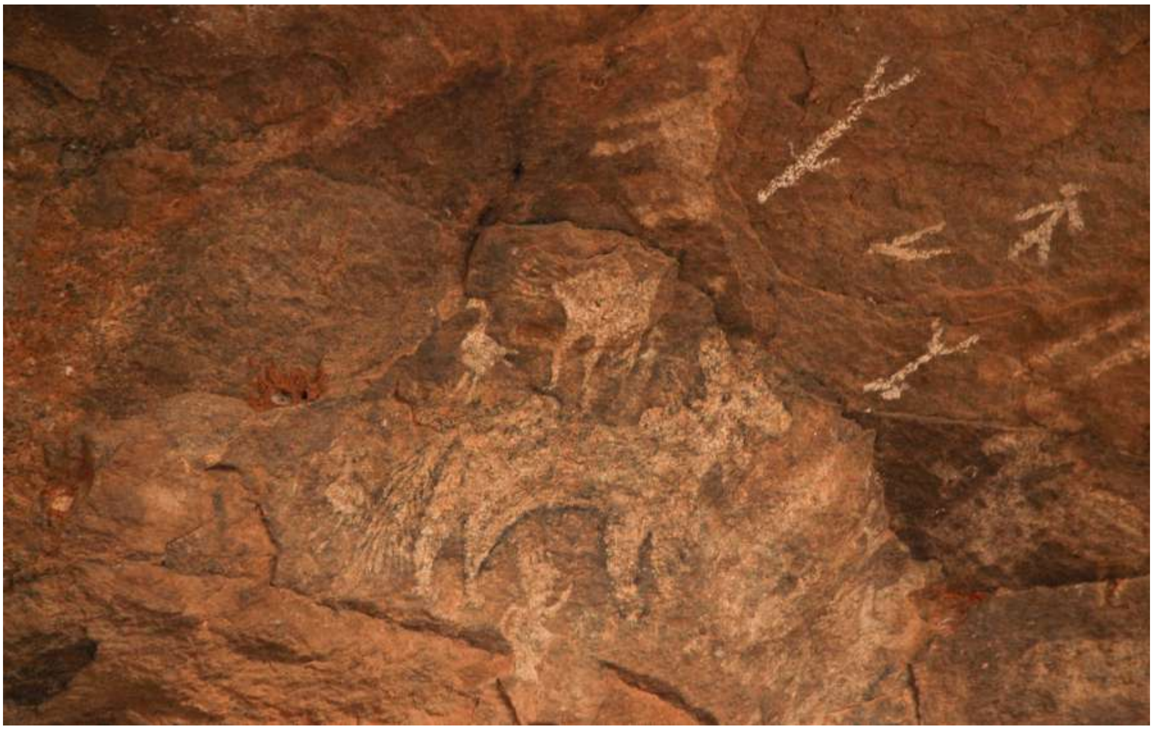


Fig. 4.2.8a Human, animal and birds

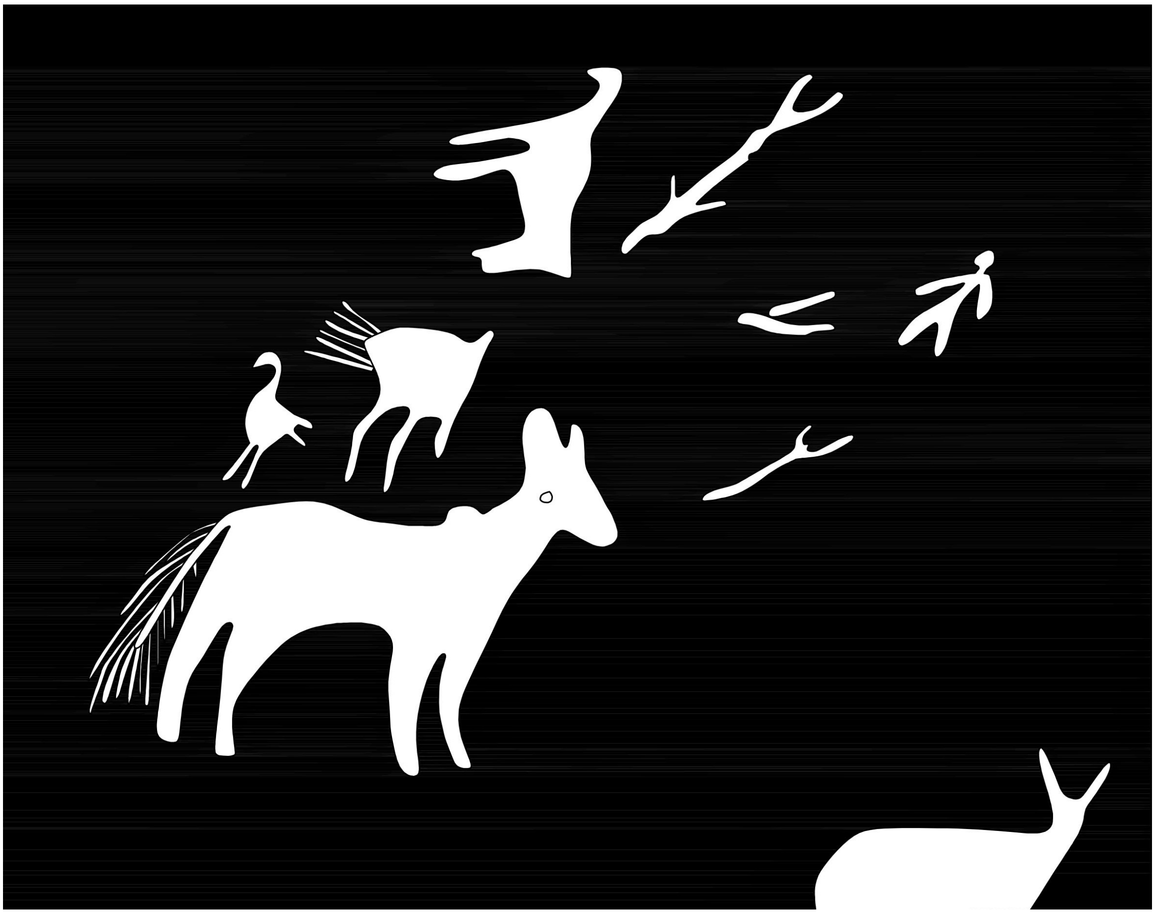


Fig. 4.2.8b Human, animal and birds

In another context, two layers of paintings are seen. One is earlier and another is of recent years drawn over the earlier human figurine (Figs. 4.2.9a-4.2.9b). It helps to understand that the existing paintings can inspire modern painters as well.

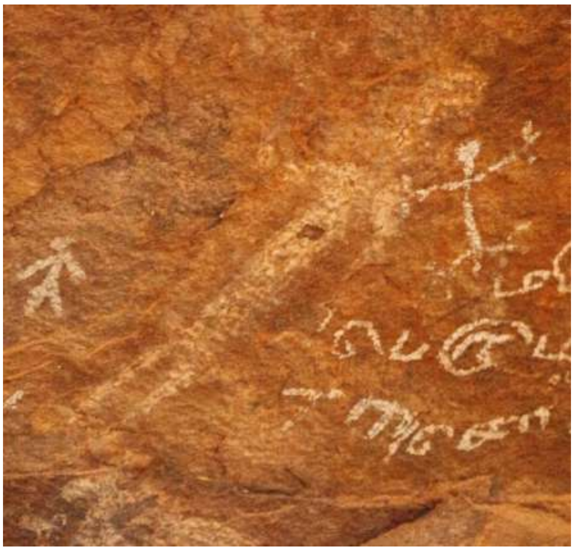


Fig. 4.2.9a Human figure

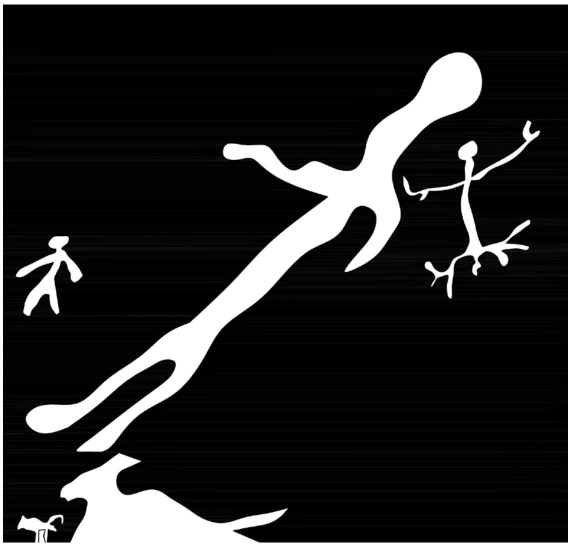


Fig. 4.2.9b Human figure

The painting here is shown with a long horned cow and a human figure attached to it (Figs. 4.2.10a-4.2.10b). The figure of a cow is drawn with lines and then filled with white colour. The human figure is depicted approaching the cow without holding a weapon in hand.

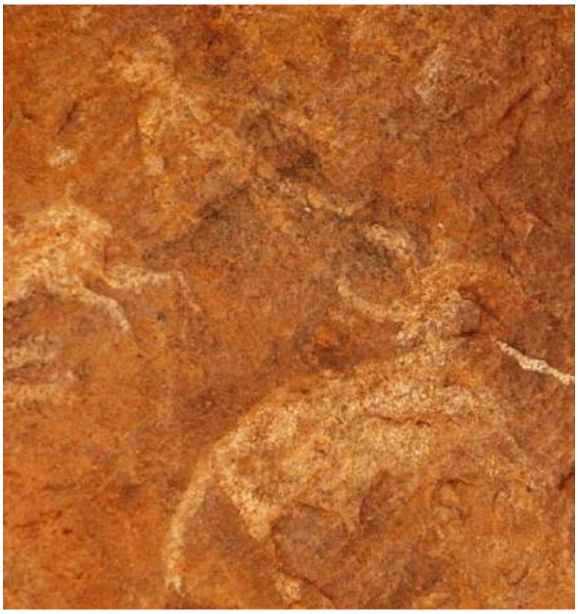
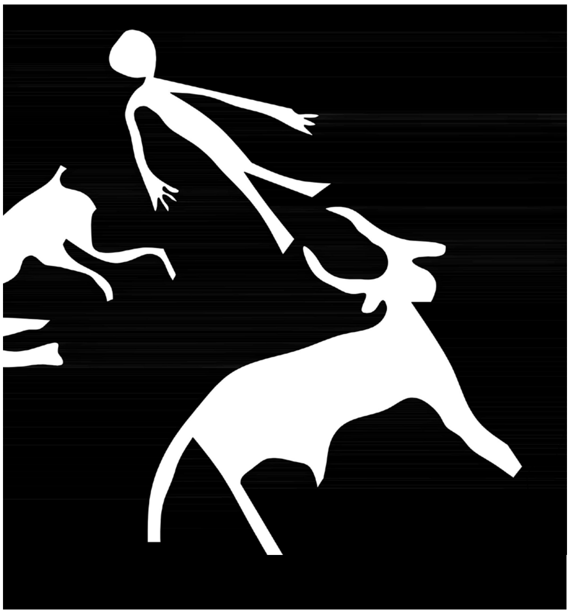


Fig. 4.2.10a Human with cattle



4.2.10b Human with cattle

A figure of a deer is painted in white with a dark coating. Its long horn is perfectly shown. When looking at the physique and morphology of the deer it may have been drawn by a highly skilled painter.

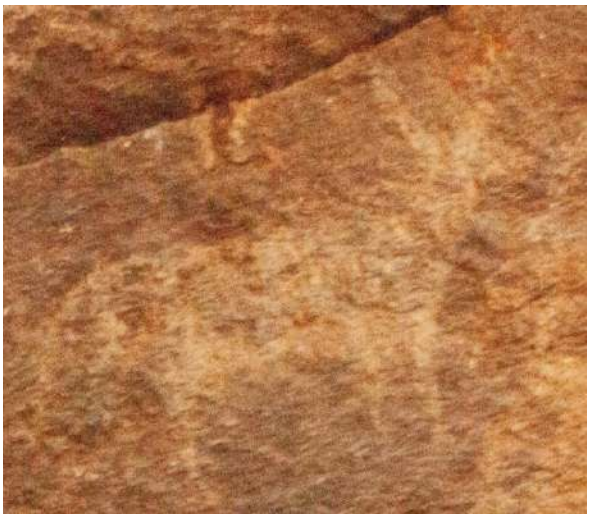


Fig. 4.2.11a Deer

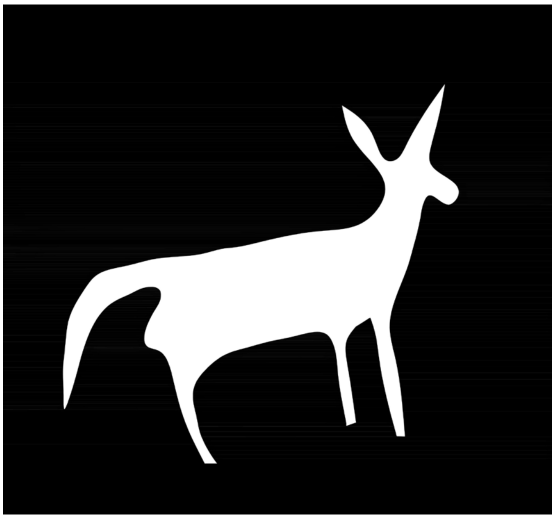


Fig. 4.2.11b Deer

A peacock figure with tail feathers is shown in white. Its long neck and tail are neatly drawn (Figs. 4.2.11a-4.2.11b). The artist has a good understanding of image size. Usually, the depiction of birds in rock paintings was much smaller than the animals, whereas in this case, it is special to see paintings of birds in four places here. The prehistoric man might have documented the birds that lived near the habitat. Some human figures have been painted in recent times.

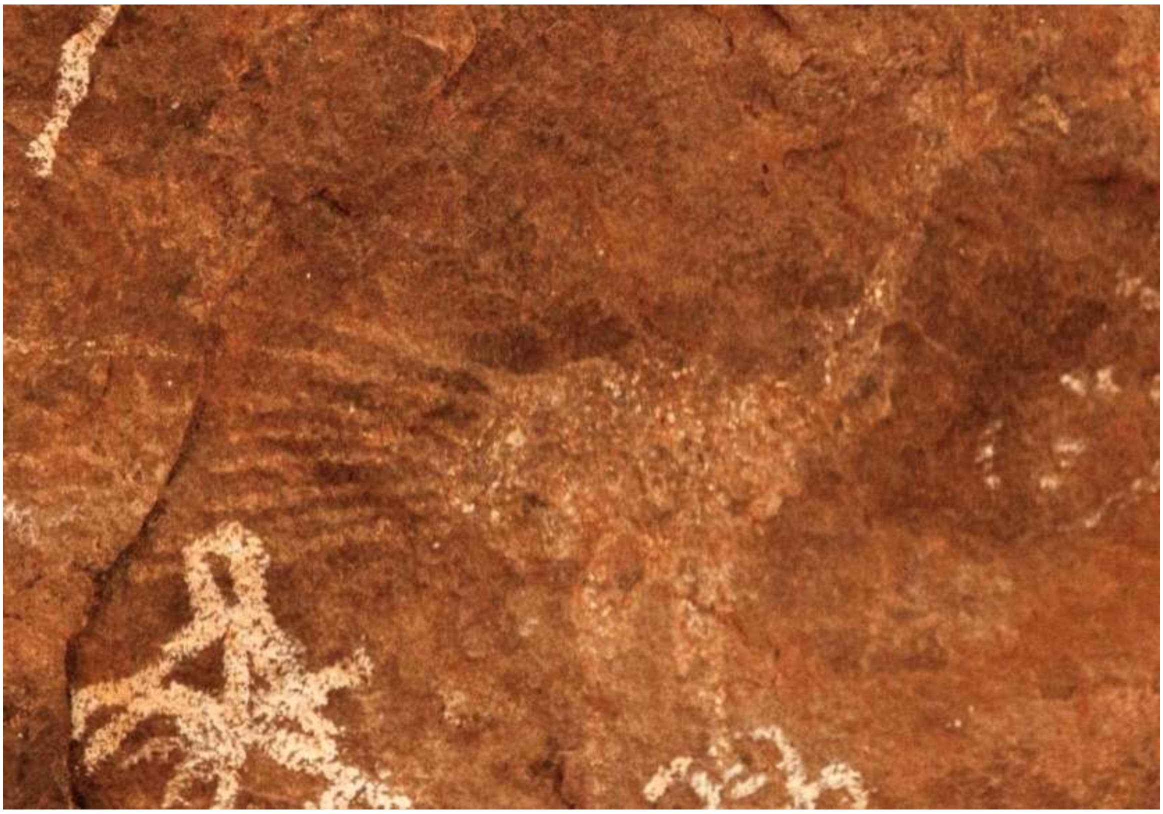


Fig. 4.2.12a Peacock

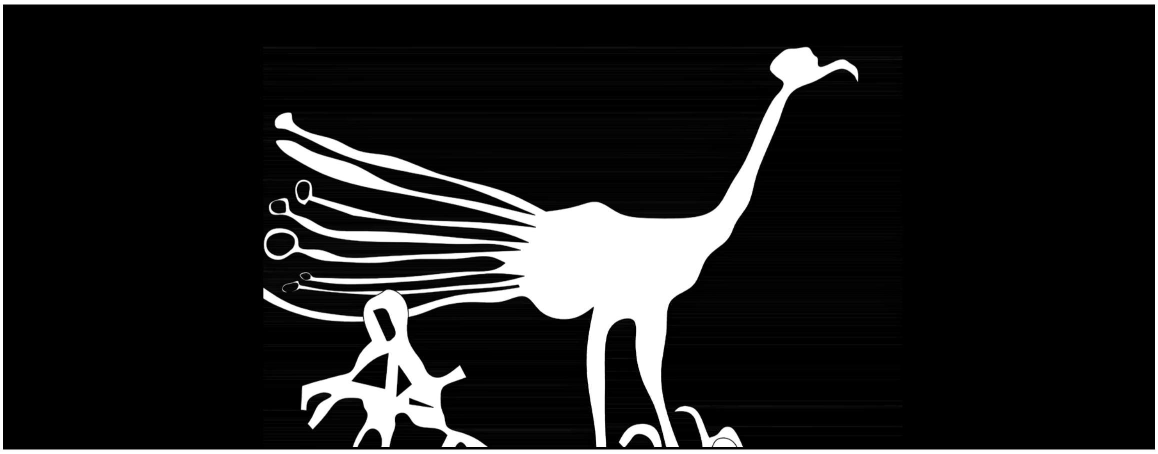


Fig. 4.2.12b Peacock

A wild fowl-like bird is painted in white. It is shown as a normal figure in simple form (Figs. 4.2.12a-4.2.12b). The appearance of this bird is shown realistically. Most of the paintings in the lower part of the shelter have been recently painted by the visitors. In ancient times, it may have been used for accommodation, so there was not much emphasis on paintings. But it is noteworthy that a large number of ancient paintings have been painted on the upper part of the shelter. Some of the painters who stayed here might have painted the portraits. At this site, some of the paintings were executed by using both the black and white pigment and such paintings have so far been identified mostly in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu.

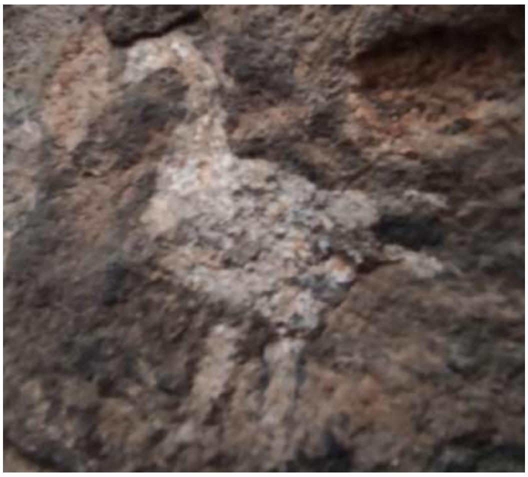


Fig. 4.2.13a Fowl

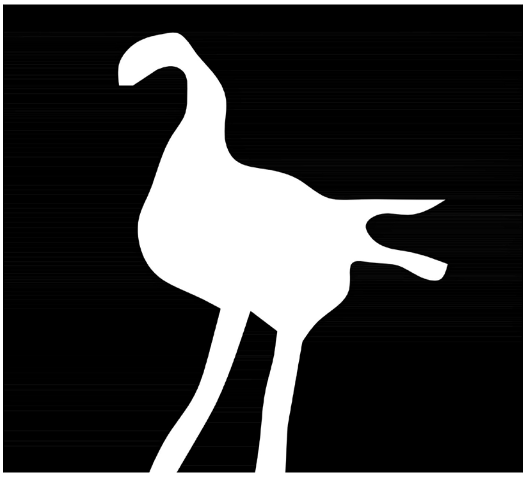


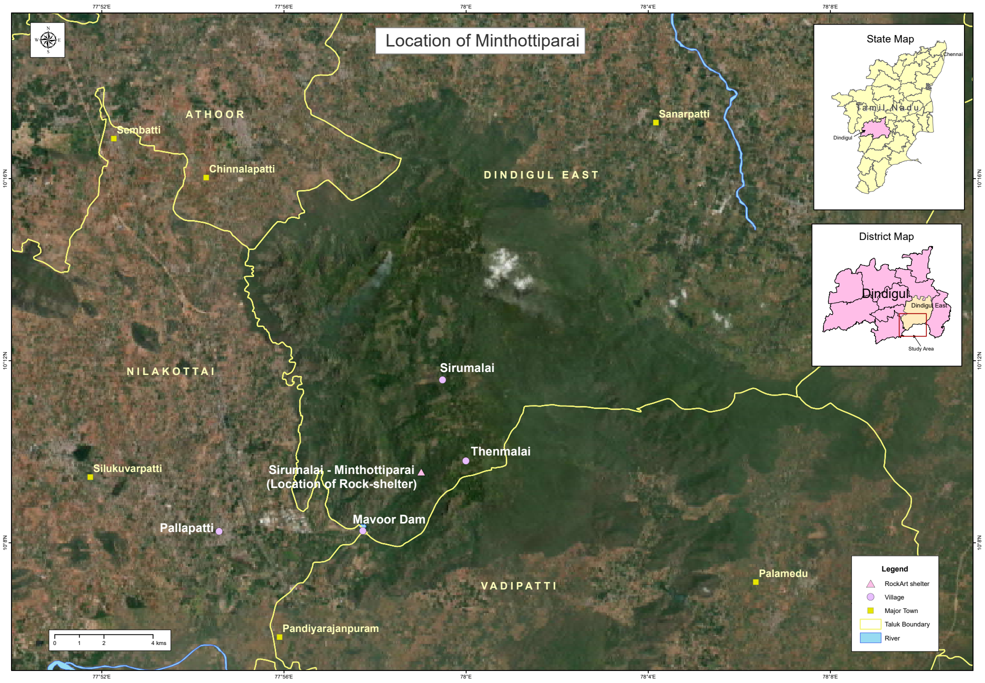
Fig. 4.2.13b Fowl

Dindigul District

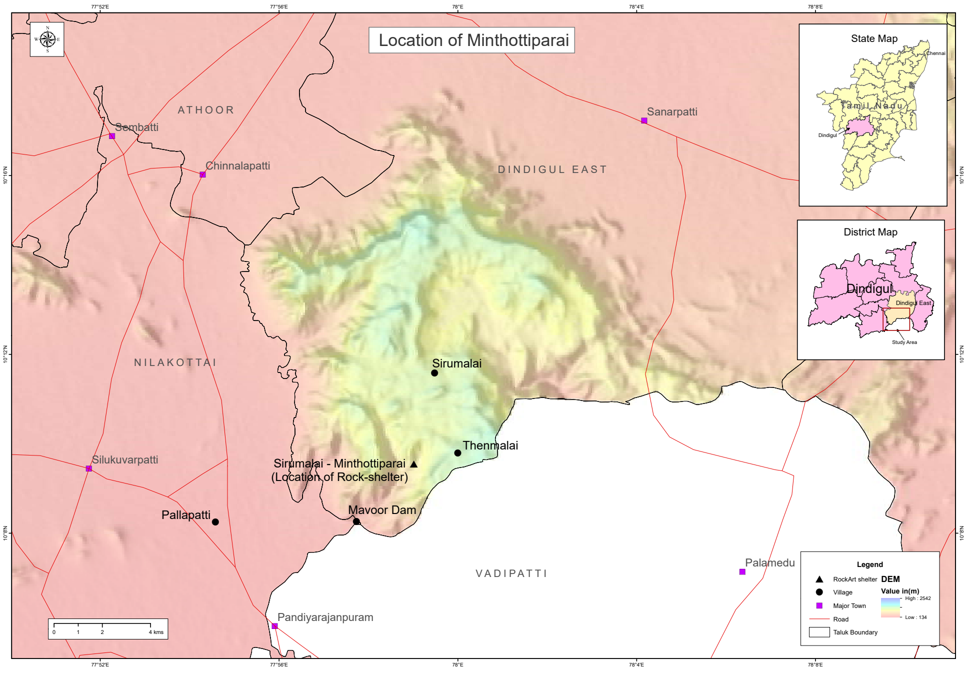
4.3 Sirumalai

Sirumalai is a hilltop village located north of Madurai and southeast of Dindigul. This is referred as Cirumalai by Palai Alamperi Sattanar in Akananuru (Akananuru 47:16). The rock art site Minthottiparai (10.15916 N; 77. 98361 E; AMSL 647m) lies on the Sirumalai hill. The site was discovered in 1984 by a local enthusiast and was reported by G.Vijayavenugopal of Madurai Kamaraj University (Vijayavenugopal 1984). There are two rock art sites - one on the western side of the Sirumalai hill overlooking Mayur Dam near Pallapatti and another on the eastern side of the hillock close to Tenaruvi (Map 4.3.1). Both the rock art sites are popularly called Sirumalai paintings and also as Aruvimalai paintings. The rock art site Minthottiparai lies 19 km away from the major village Sirumalai palaiyur. The village name Palaiyur stands for old village (*palaiya* means old/ancient; ur means village). This ancient village Palaiyur is the original name. Since it is situated on the Sirumalai hill, it is named after the hillock as Sirumalai Palaiyur. The site could be approached through two routes. The first route goes from Sirumalai Palaiyur to the site after crossing Palaiyur Pudur, Agasthiyarmalai, Tenmalai, Kannukuttiparai and Minthottiparai (the actual rock art site) respectively lies at the distance of 2 km, 6 km, 9 km, 12 km and 19 km from Sirumalai Palaiyur (Map 4.3.2). Thus, the total distance covers from Sirumalai Palaiyur to Mithottiparai is about 19 km. There is a road connectivity from Sirumalai Palaiyur to Tenmalai covering distance of 9 km. One has to take diversion at Tenmalai through a mud road to Karuppusamykoil also known as Aiyyanarkoil lying about 7 km from Tenmalai. There are two temple complexes both were called as Karuppannasamykoil. The first one had Linga, Nandhi and Sapthamadrikas. Little away from the first complex, the second complex containing Aiyyanar, Linga, Dakshinamurti. Just opposite to this Siva or Aiyyanar temple there is a Karuppannasamy temple. There is a mud road from Tenmalai to Kannukuttiparai. One has to take foot path through density forest from Kannukuttiparai to Minthottiparai (the rock art site) for about 7 km. In this hill, rock paintings were noticed at two places namely Aruvimalai and Alangaltheri. The Aruvimalai is located in the southwestern corner of the hill near Mavattu (mavurudaru) reservoir.

There is another route to the rock art site. One has to take a diversion at Pallapatti-pirivu located on the Vadipatti to Dindigul (Dindukkal) road about 3 km before Vadipatti. Vadipatti lies on the Dindigul-Madurai road at the distance of 38 km from Dindigul and 29 km Madurai. From Pallapatti one has to reach the site after crossing the Mavur dam located 4 km from Pallapatti. The rock art site Minthottiparai lies 7 km from Mavur dam which could be approached by a walk through the forest. Most of the paintings here are in white, some in red and a few paintings in white and red. Some paintings present difficulty in recognizing the images because the colour is heavily faded. The hill is still inhabited by the Paliyar communities.


Location of Minthottiparai
State Map
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
Dindigul
District Map
Dindigul
Dindigul East
Study Area
ATHOOR
Sembatti
Chinnalapatti
Sanarpatti
DINDIGUL EAST
NILAKOTTAI
Sirumalai
Thenmalai
Silukuvarpatti
Sirumalai - Minthottiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Pallapatti
Mavoor Dam
VADIPATTI
Palamedu
Pandiyarajanpuram
Legend
RockArt shelter
Village
Major Town
Taluk Boundary
River
0 1 2 4 kms
77°52'E
77°56'E
78°E
78°4'E
78°8'E
10°16'N
10°12'N
10°8'N

Map 4.3.1 Location Of Sirumalai-Minthottiparai


Location of Minthottiparai
State Map
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
Dindigul
District Map
Dindigul
Dindigul East
Study Area
ATHOOR
Sembatti
Chinnalapatti
Sanarpatti
DINDIGUL EAST
NILAKOTTAI
Sirumalai
Thenmalai
Silukuvarpatti
Sirumalai - Minthottiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Pallapatti
Mavoor Dam
VADIPATTI
Palamedu
Pandiyarajanpuram
Legend
RockArt shelter
Village
Major Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 2542
Low : 134
0 1 2 4 kms
77°52'E
77°56'E
78°E
78°4'E
78°8'E
10°16'N
10°12'N
10°8'N

Map 4.3.2 Location of Sirumalai-Minthottiparai

Inscriptions

There are two slab inscriptions depicting the activities of the trade guild called Ayyappolil (Figs. 4.3.1-4.3.2). The first inscription on a partially broken slab carries 12 lines. The term Ayyappolil suggests that it is a trade guild inscription. On palaeographical ground, it could be dated to 11-12th century CE. There is another loose slab continuing a *trisula* symbol emerging from a star symbol.

There is a second slab containing an inscription datable around 12th – 13th century CE. At the base of the inscription crescent, conch and a goddess seated in a padmasana posture (Fig. 4.3.2). The above inscribed slab is noticed in the garden called Nagamalaithottam. The slabs are also known as *manikkal*. The trade guild inscriptions

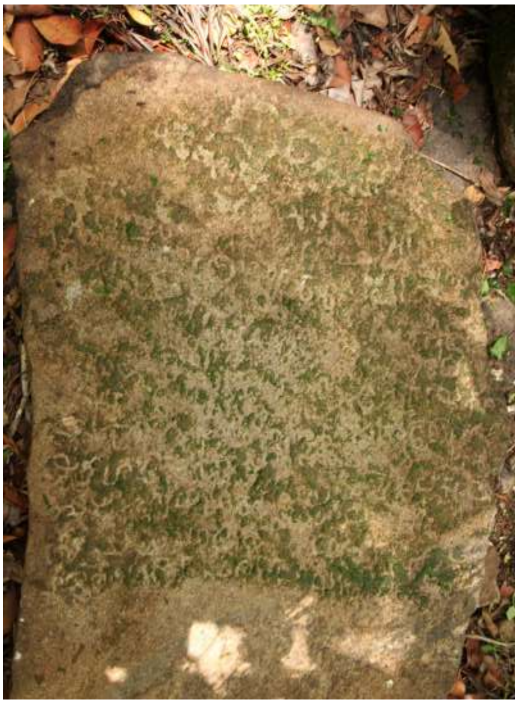


Fig. 4.3.1 Trade guild inscription

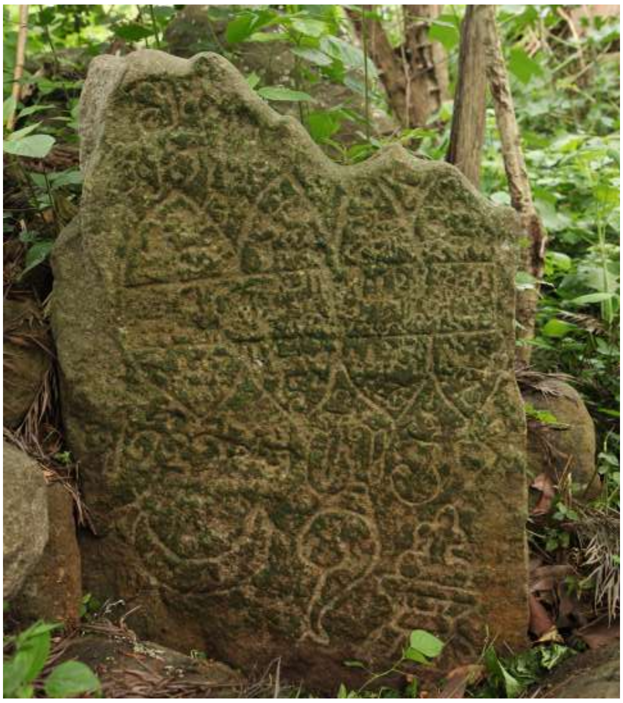


Fig. 4.3.2 Trade guild inscription

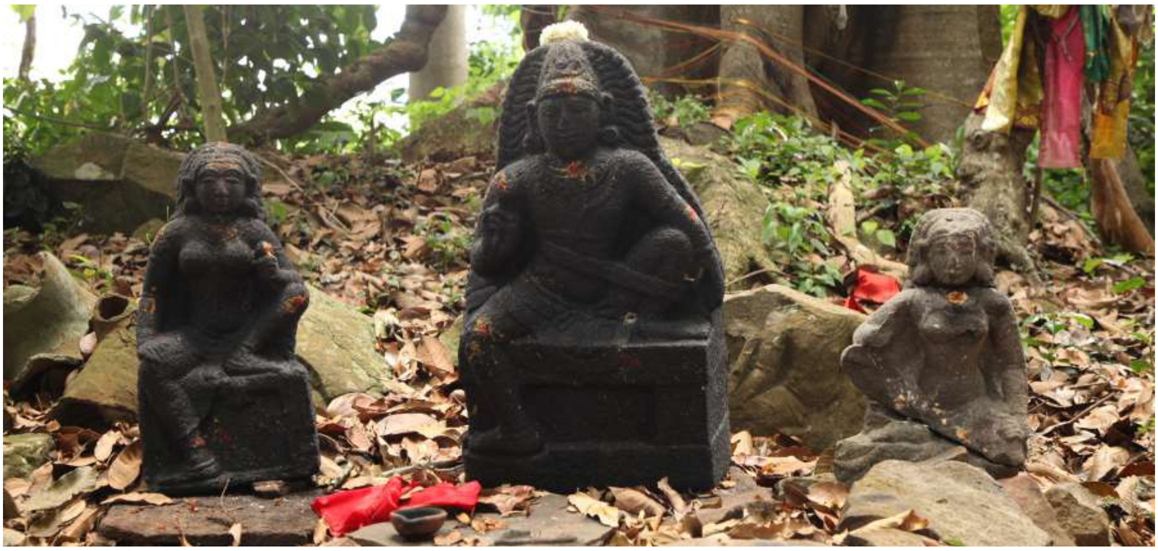
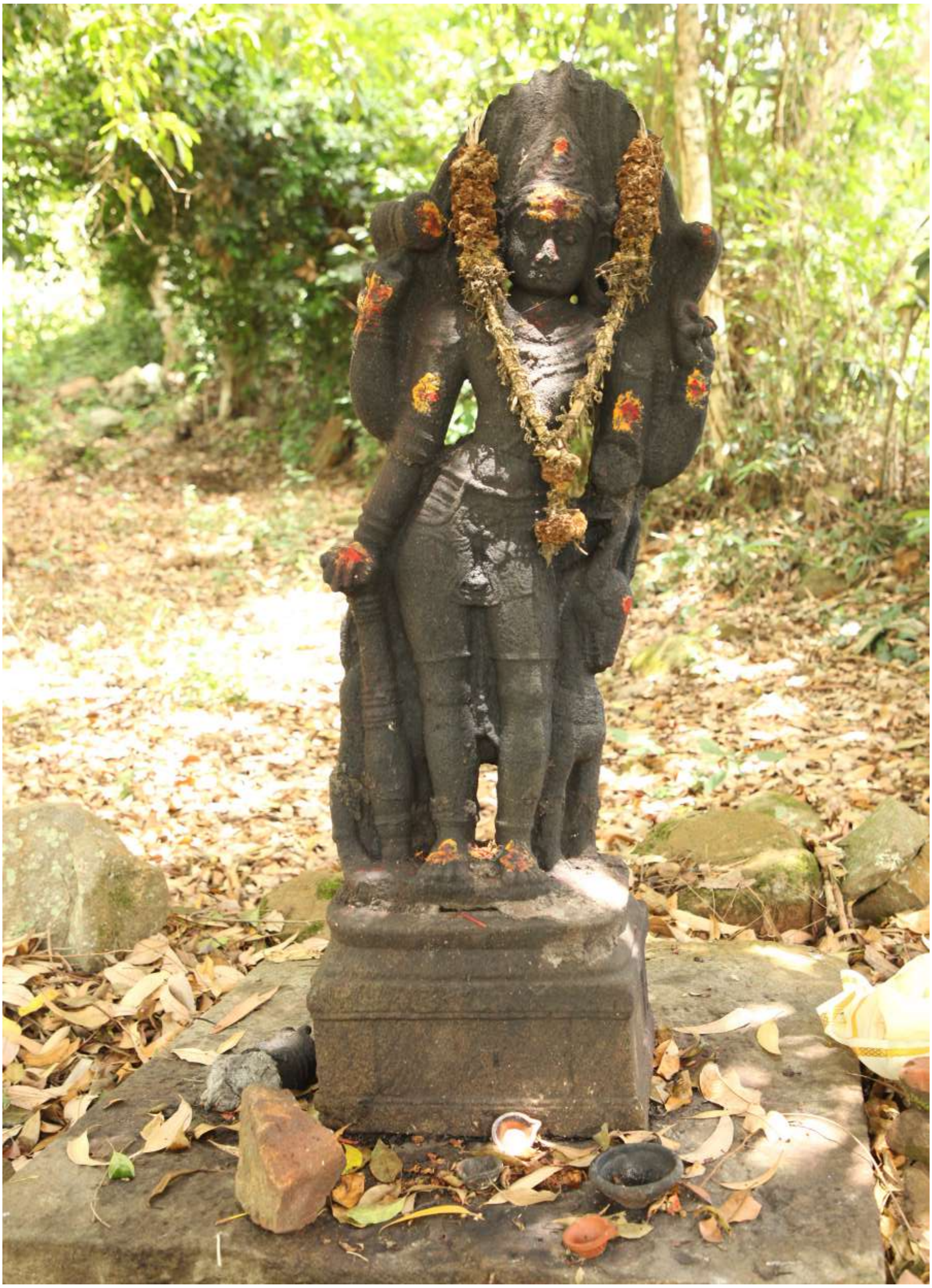


Fig.4.3.3 Sirumalai Ayyanar



▸ *Figs. 4.3.3-4.3.4 Loose sculptures*

and the Aiyyanar sculptures suggest that there was a trade centre probably involved in the pepper trade as Sirumalai is one of the peppers growing areas of Tamil Nadu (Figs.4.3.3-4.3.4).

Rock Shelter

The total length of the rock shelter is approximately 14 m and the total height of the is 6.15 m and the length of the painted surface is about 9.10 m. The total area of the painted surface is about 54 square meters. The documentation was carried out from west to east and the columns and rows were divided and numbered accordingly.

Description

The images seen on the rock-shelter consist of hunting scene, death scene, dancing scene, tree, worship, human and animal, human, family, grazing animal, animal, human and animal, leader and followers, animal riding, erotic, fight scene, elephant and bird etc...

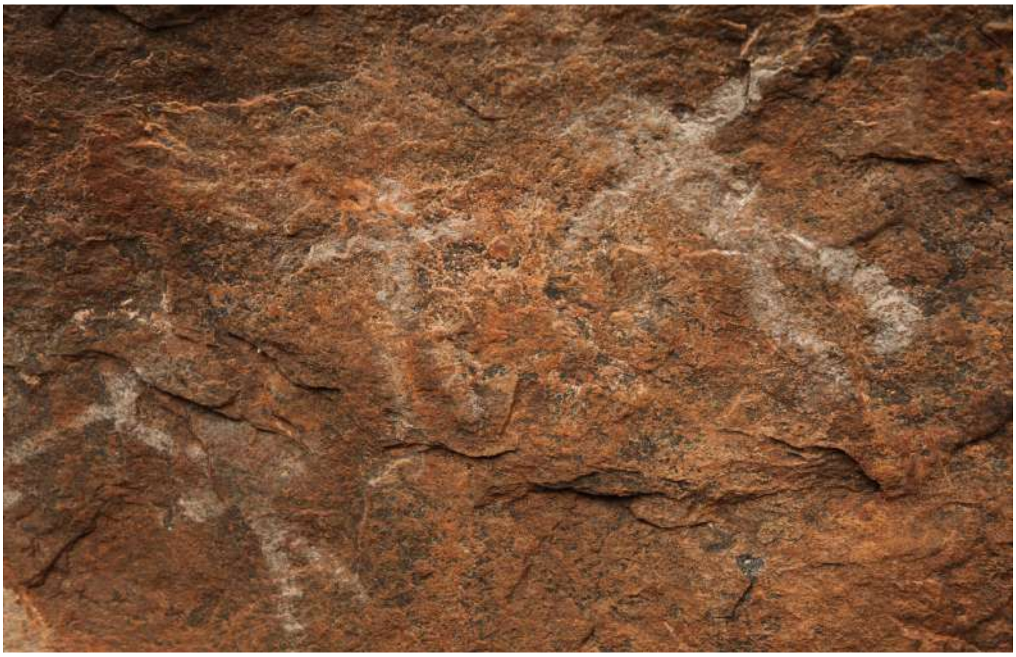


Fig. 4.3.5a Dancing scene

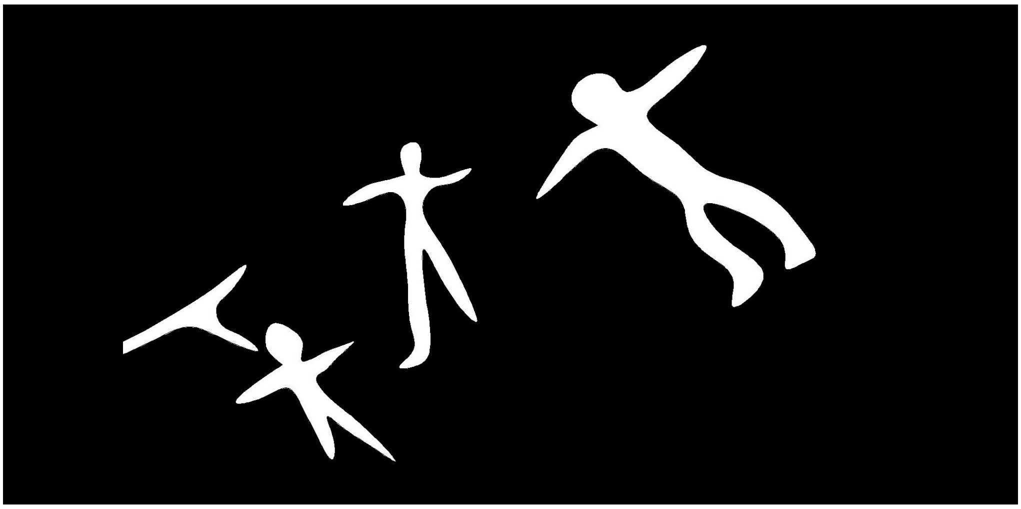


Fig.4.3.5b Dancing scene

Panel Description

There are three human figures painted in white and drawn in simple lines (Fig. 4.3.5a-4.3.5b). All three figures are shown in different movements. These are likely to be dance scenes.

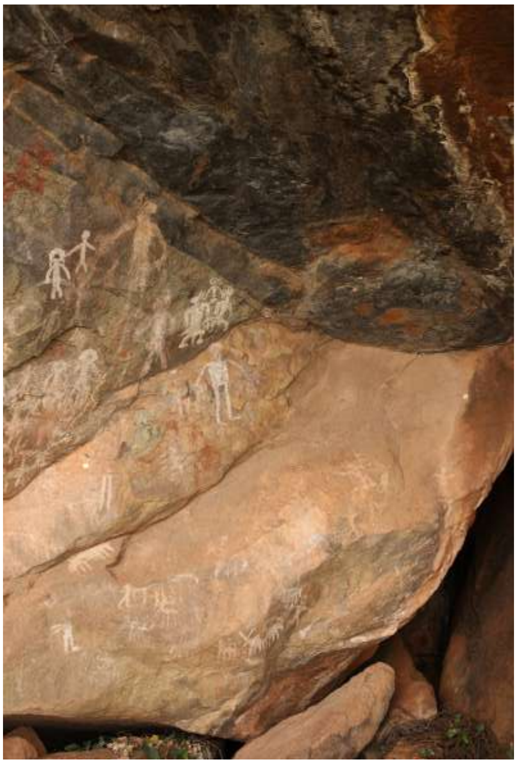


Fig. 4.3.6a Dancing scene

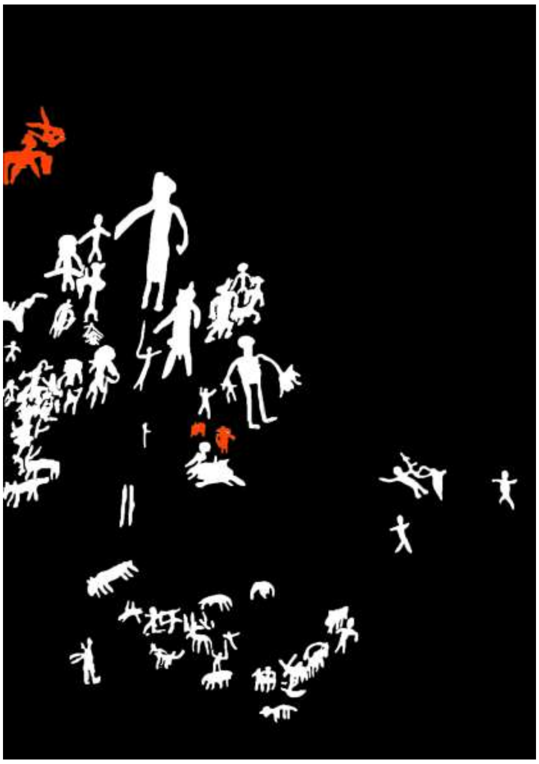


Fig. 4.3.6b Dancing scene

This panel depicts six human figures dancing with their arms outstretched (Figs. 4.3.6a-4.3.6b). These are all painted in white. The paintings are made with very simple lines imposed by previous paintings. These earlier paintings are in white and dull compared to later paintings.

Another group depicts a deer hunting scene (Figs. 4.3.7a-4.3.7b). A hunter is shown holding a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other hand. A deer is shown in the

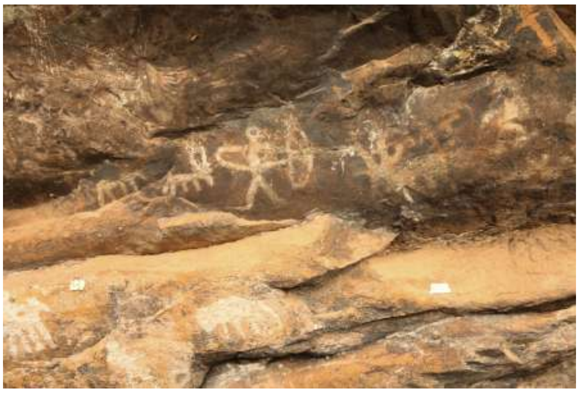


Fig. 4.3.7a Hunting scene

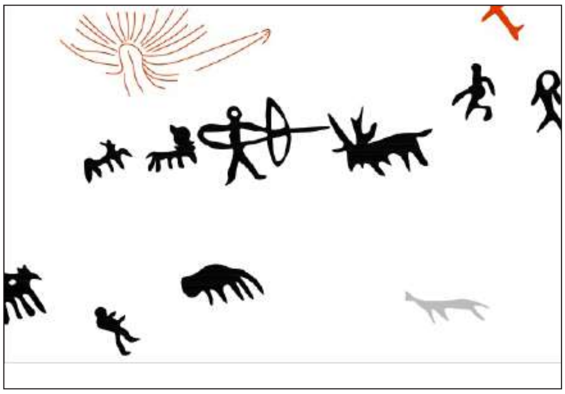


Fig. 4.3.7b Hunting scene

front and two more deers are seen to the right side of the hunter. Apart from deer, other animals belonging to the same surroundings were also drawn naturally. These paintings are line drawings and were drawn using white pigment.

The panel depicts an elegant tree painted in white with branches (Figs. 4.3.8a-4.3.8b). A cult ritual-like object is shown in front of a tree, it assumed to be a continuation of the tree worship.

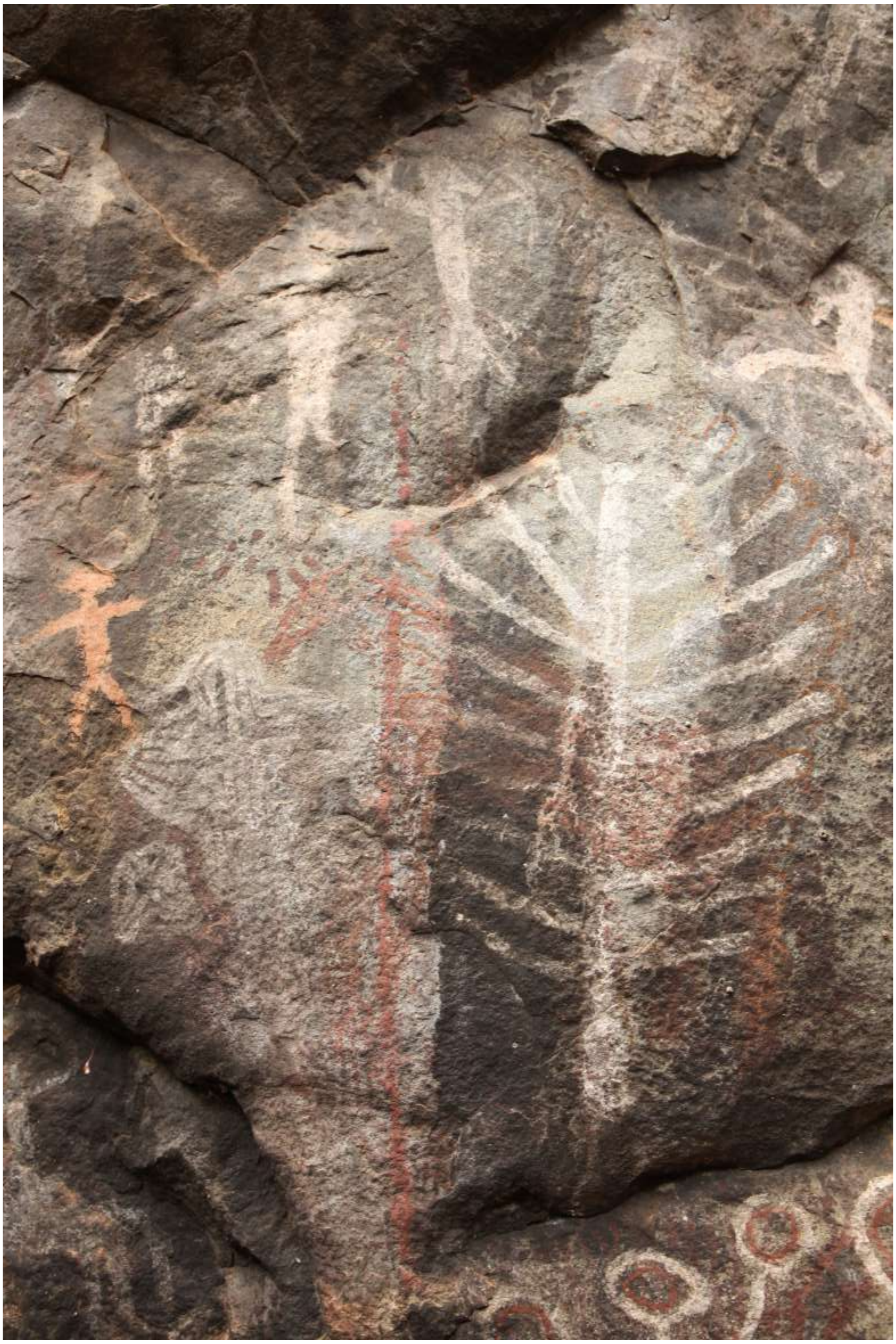


Fig. 4.3.8a Tree

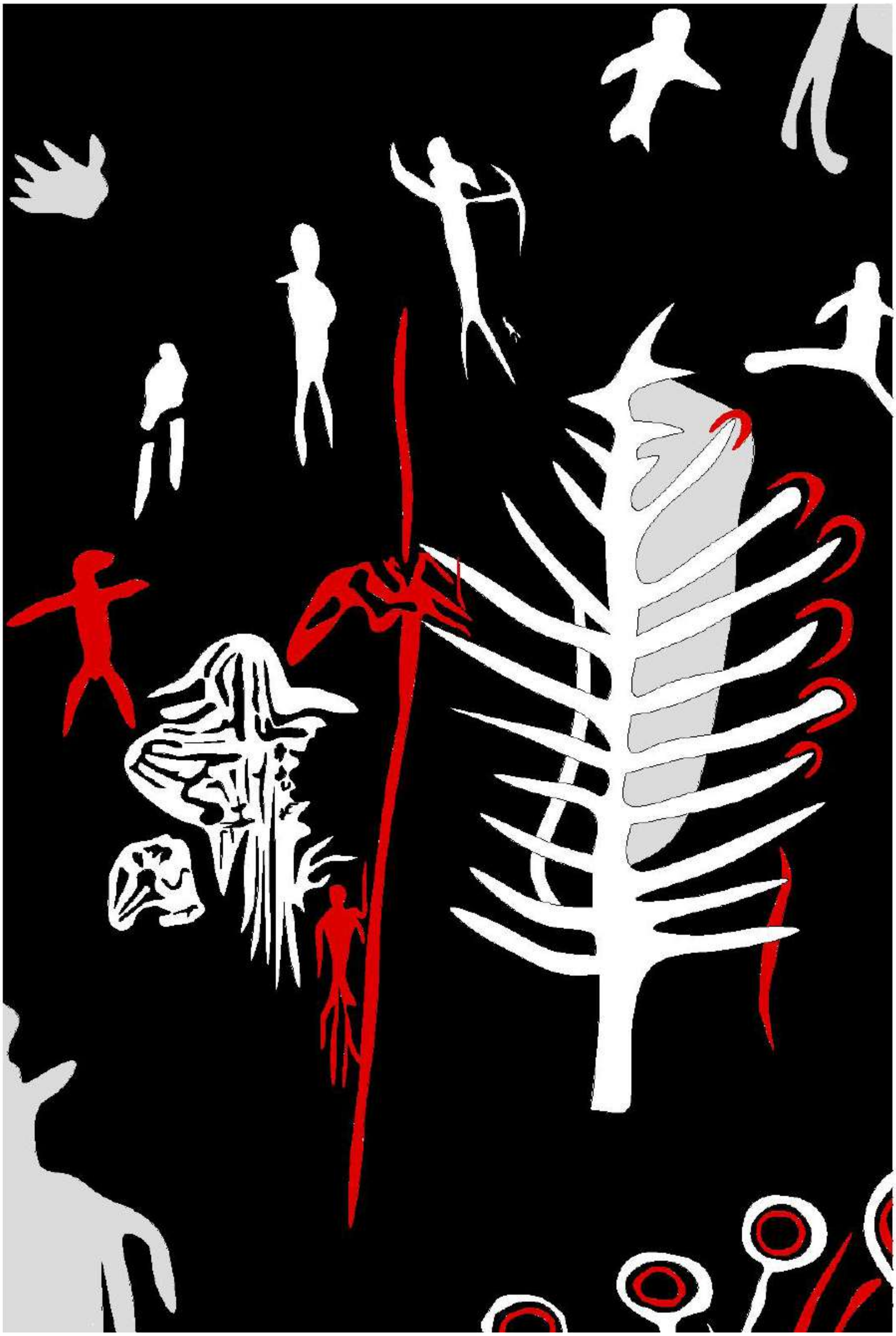


Fig. 4.3.8b Tree

In front of the tree, human figures are depicted (Figs. 4.3.9a-4.3.9b). It shows human figures holding some kind of weapons. The human figures were drawn in various heights reflecting different age groups. Some human figures were shown wearing the chest brace (*channaveera*). These paintings are drawn in white colour superimposed over the earlier red paintings suggesting that red is earlier. Among the depicted animal figures some were considered to be dogs. The dog's tail shown here is very dense and the fur is uniquely marked. Opposite to the animal figures, humans were shown holding non-hunting objects in their hands. It shows they are training the wild dogs for hunting.

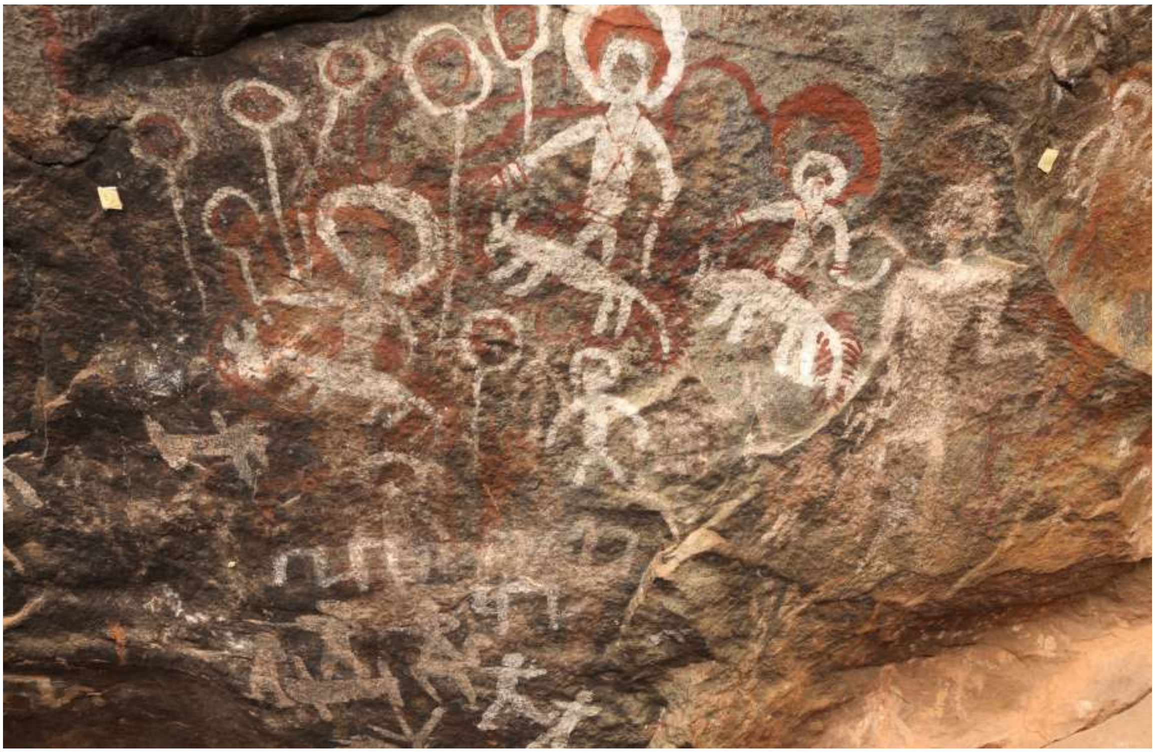


Fig. 4.3.9a Worship scene

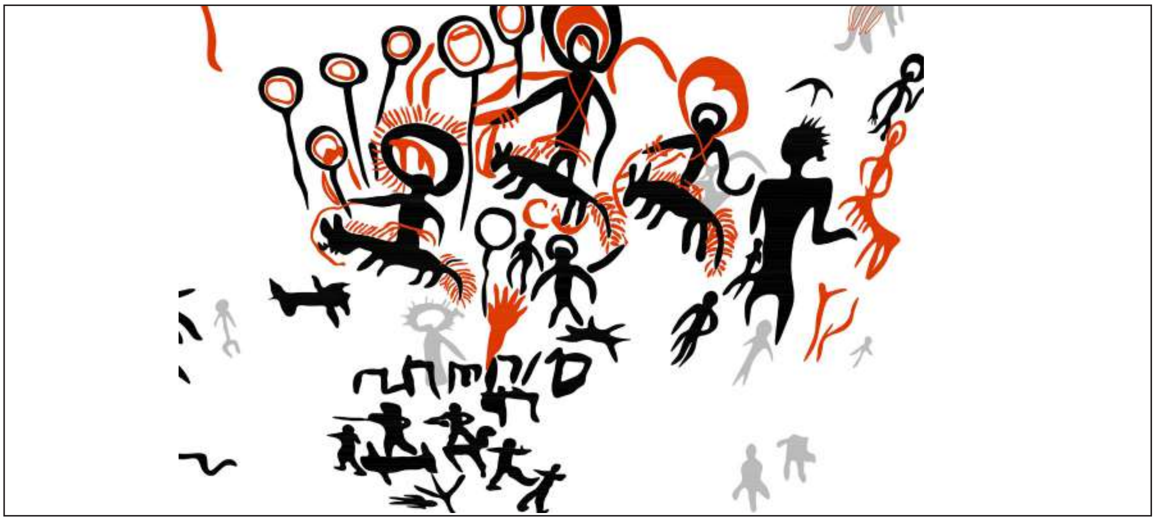


Fig. 4.3.9b Worship scene

These (Figs. 4.3.10a-4.3.10b) paintings show two animals in a ready-to-fight posture. They may be considered a hound and tiger or leopard. In the middle of the two animals, a human figure is drawn. It shows a human figure commanding the animal with his weapon. Behind the scene, a human figure holding a long stick is shown suggesting that he is about to attack the animals. Besides, some more human figures are shown and they are all painted in white. Behind these paintings series of lines are drawn in red colour and this painting may be considered as an earlier one. These painting scenes are the reminiscent of events that can occur during the hunting.

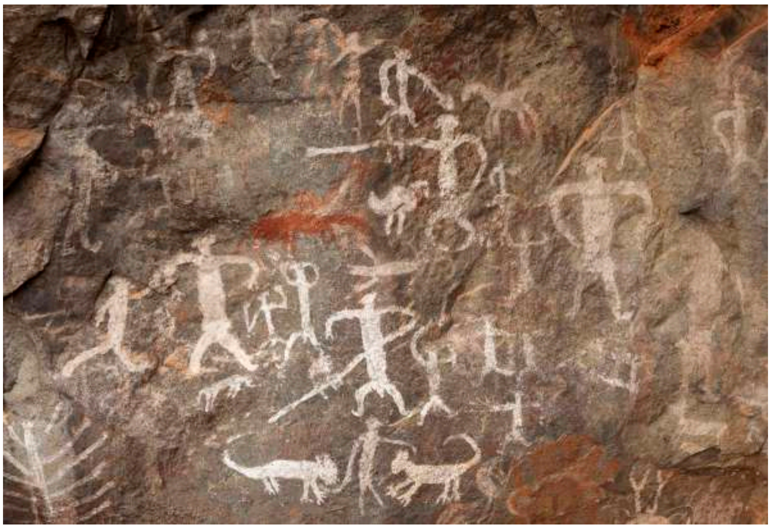


Fig. 4.3.10a Hunting scene

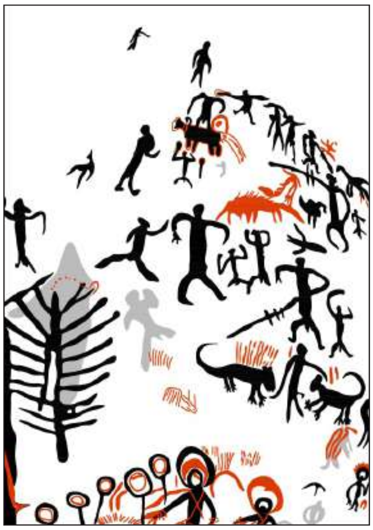


Fig. 4.3.10b Hunting scene

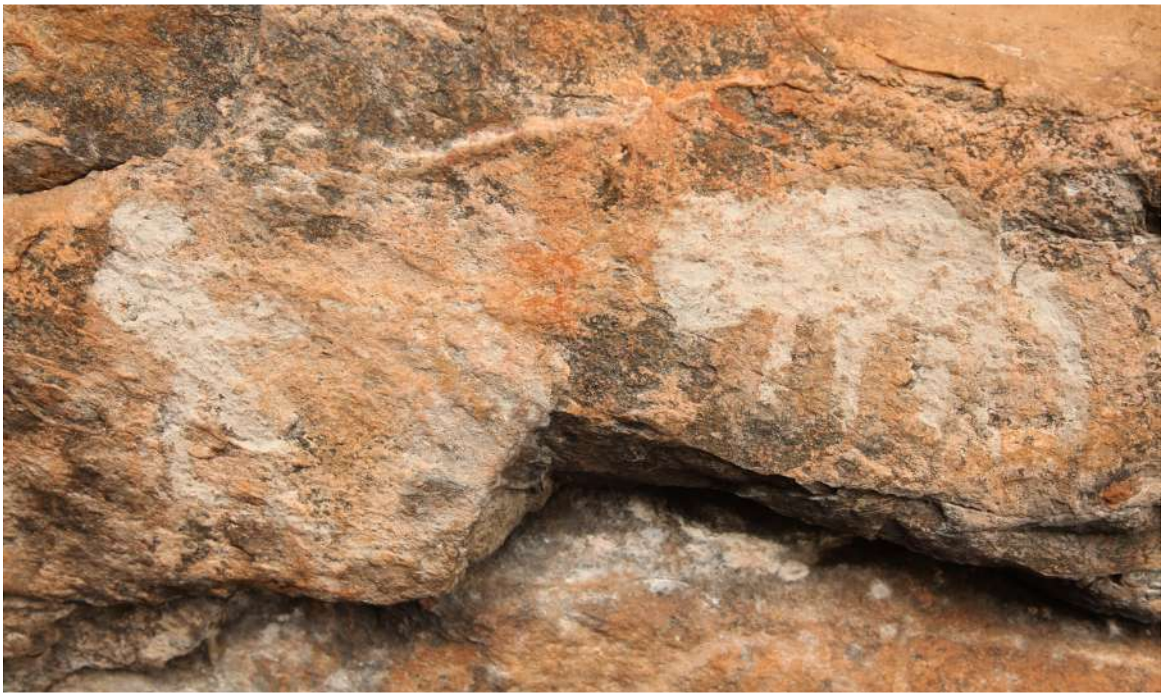


Fig. 4.3.11a Human and animal

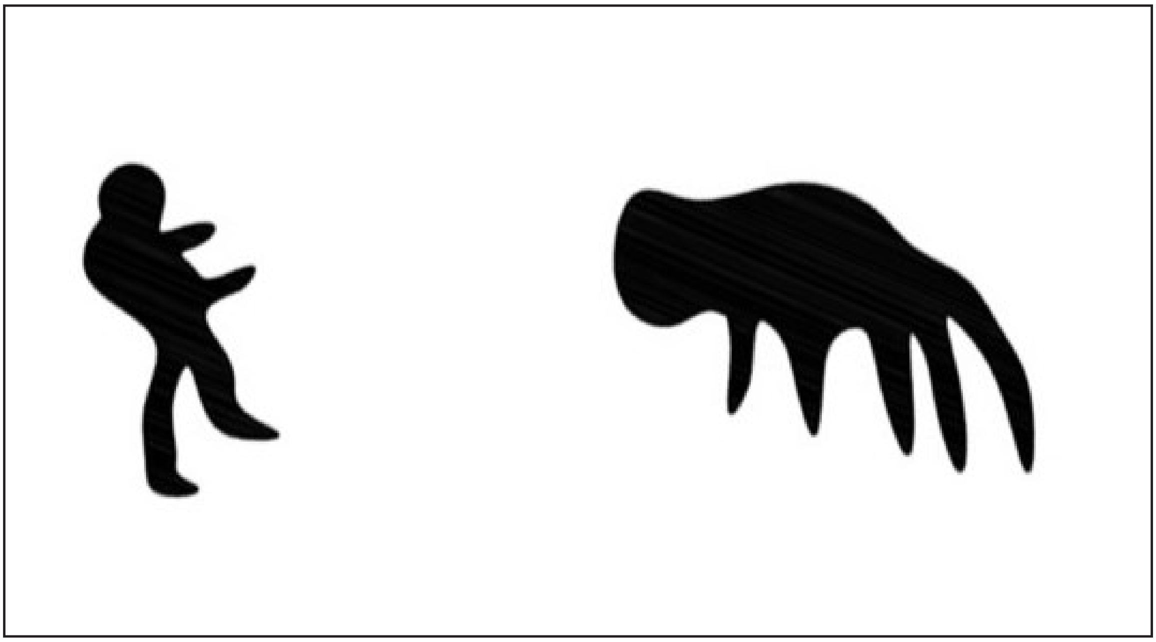


Fig. 4.3.11b Human and animal

This panel depicts human and animal figures in white (Figs. 4.3.11a-4.3.11b). The animal looks like a dog. The human figure drawn in walking position and figure has a big belly. This figure may be considered as pregnant woman.

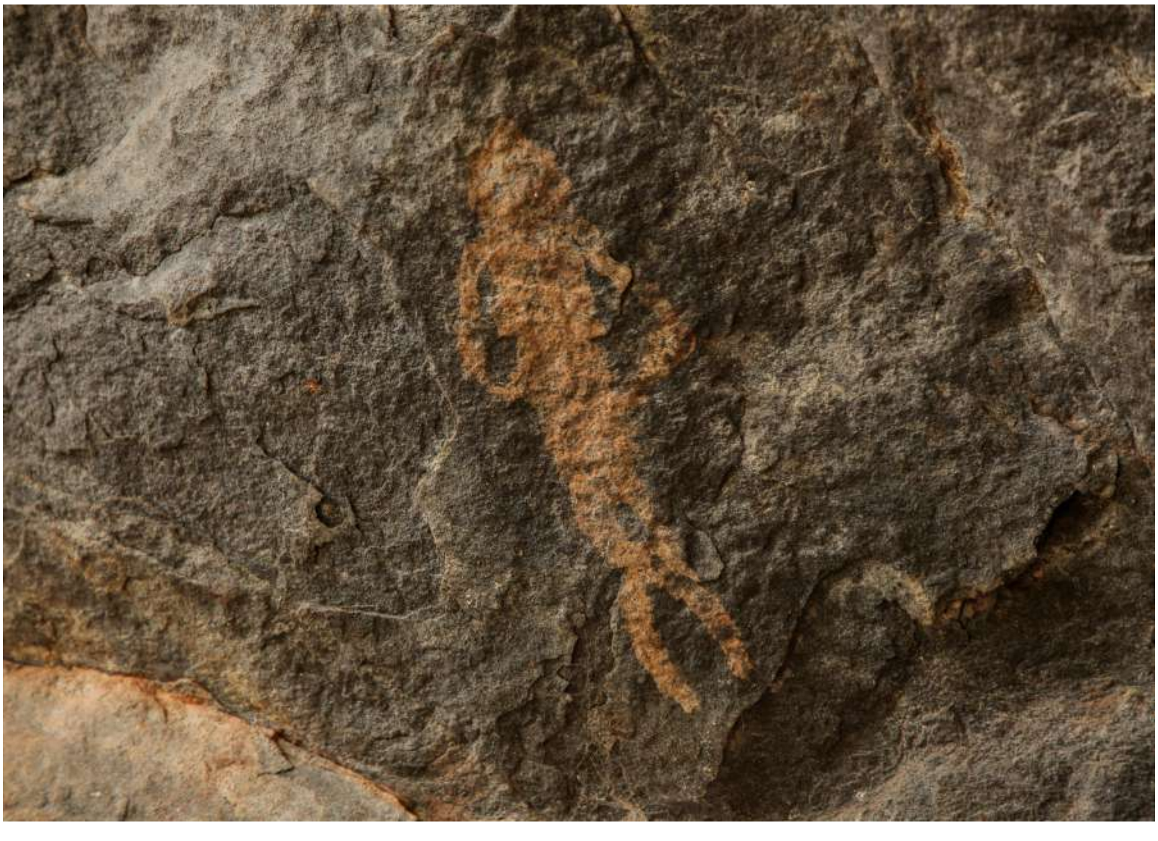


Fig. 4.3.12a Human

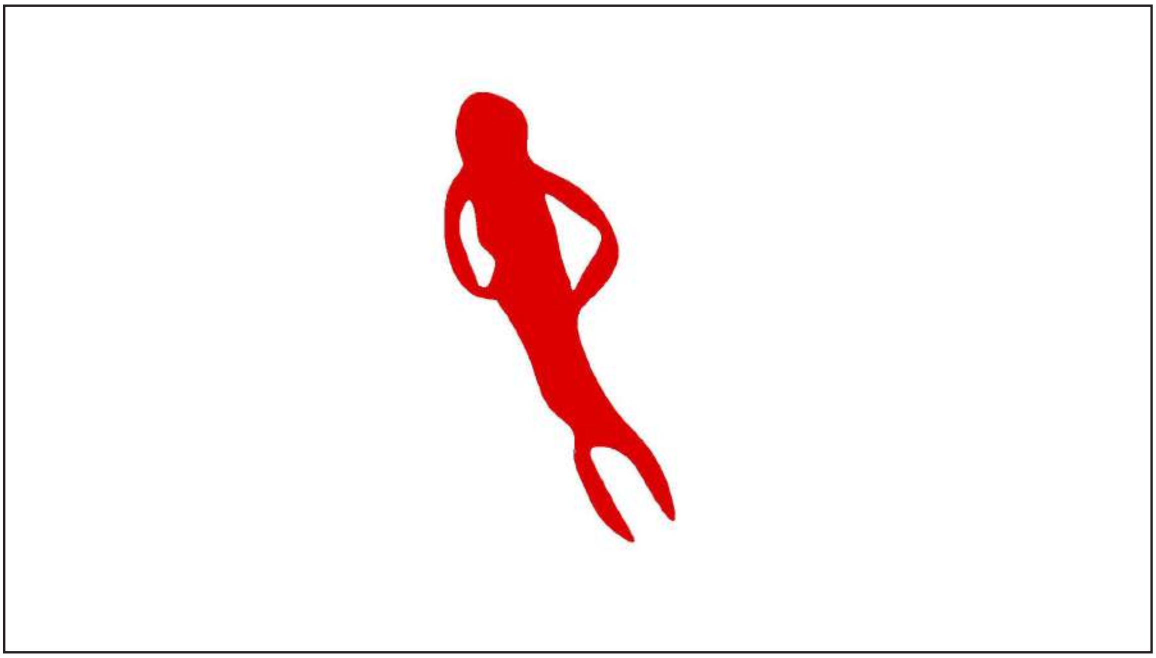


Fig. 4.3.12b Human

The painting shows a tall human figure (Figs. 4.3.12a-4.3.12b). This type of painting is rarely noticed in Tamil Nadu. This figure was drawn in white colour and the later figure was painted in pink colour by the same painter or other people.

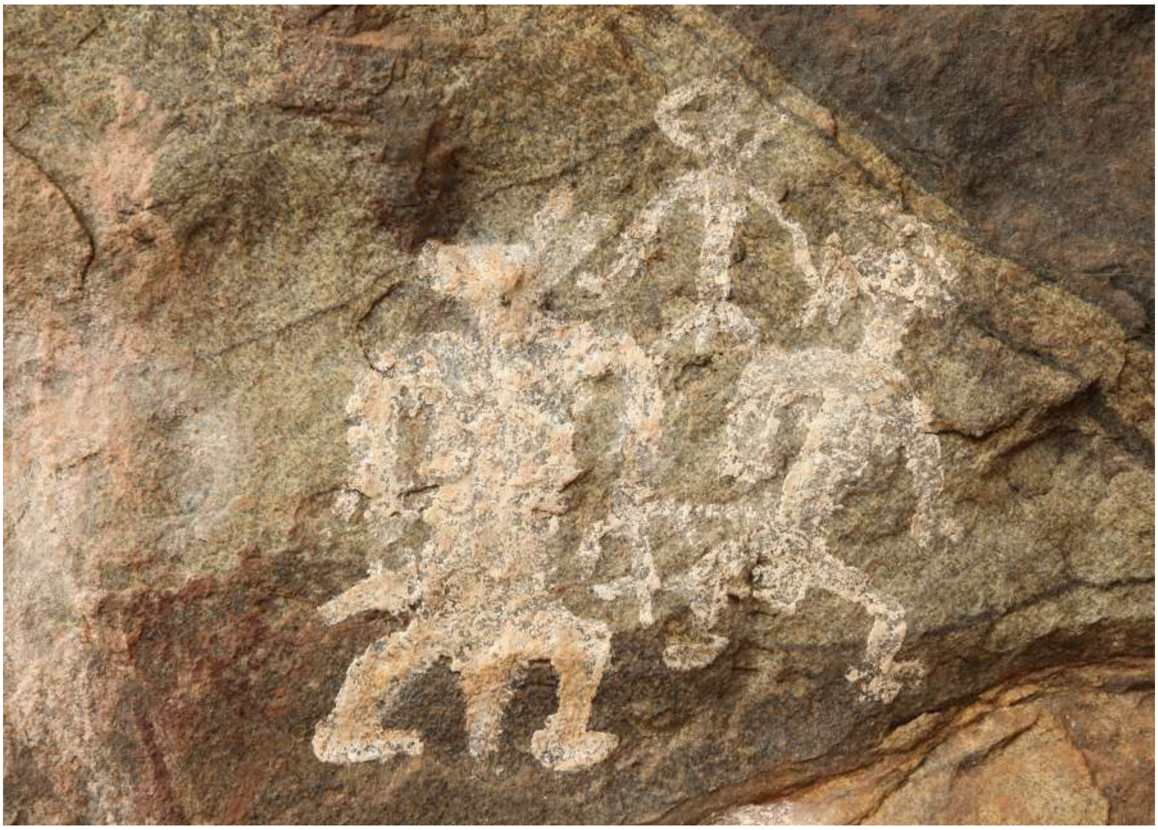


Fig. 4.3.13a Family

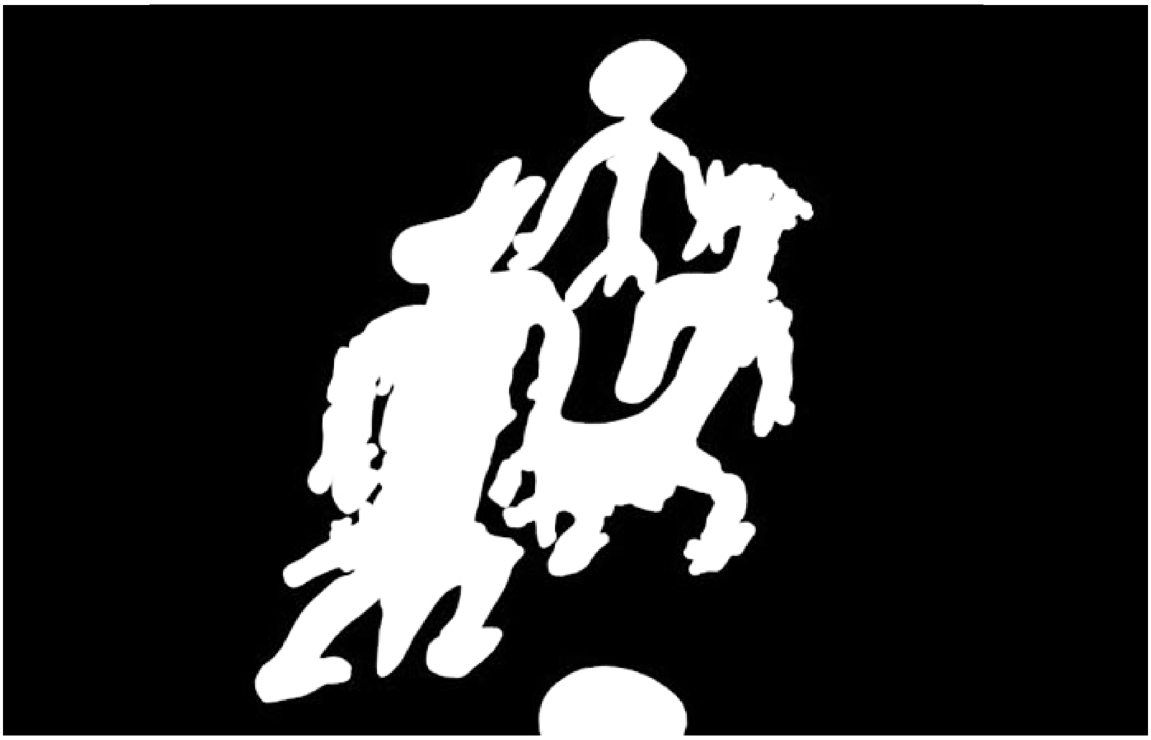


Fig. 4.3.13b Family

This panel depicts three human figures in which two human figures are painted in large size and the other one in a small size which might represent two adults (husband & wife) and a child (Figs. 4.3.13a-4.3.13b). The projected phallus suggests that these figures represent ithyphallic.

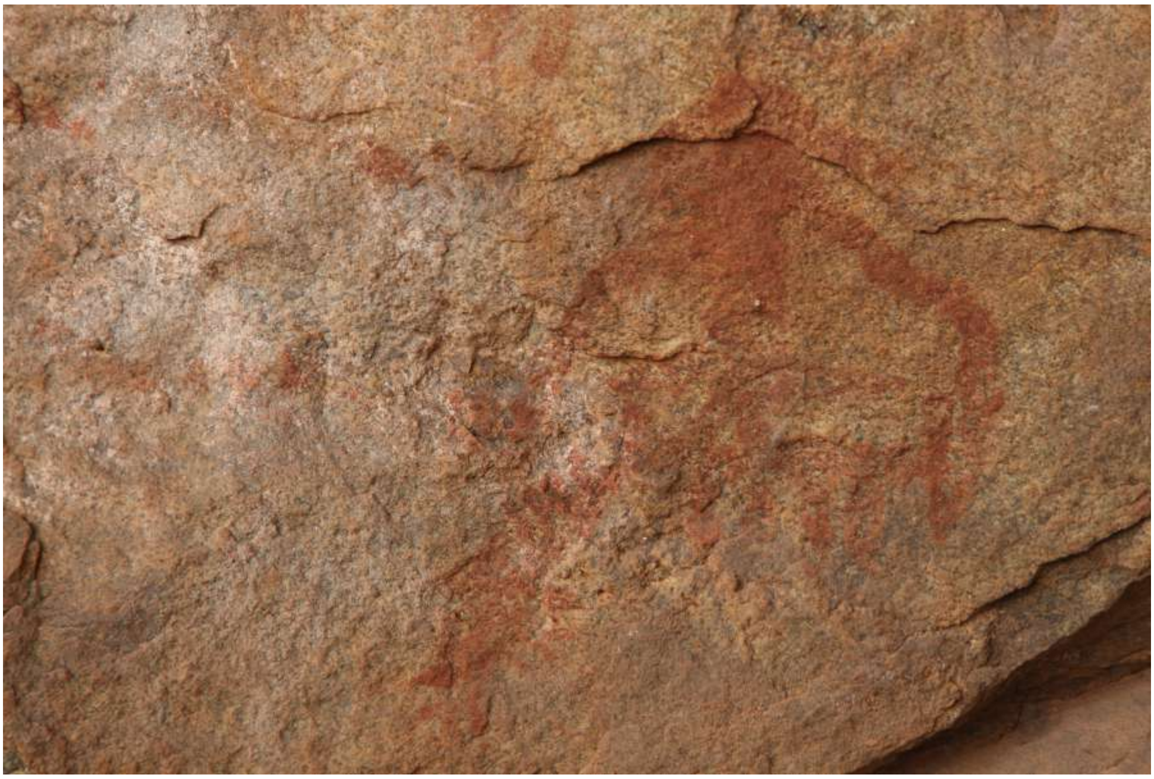


Fig. 4.3.14a Human

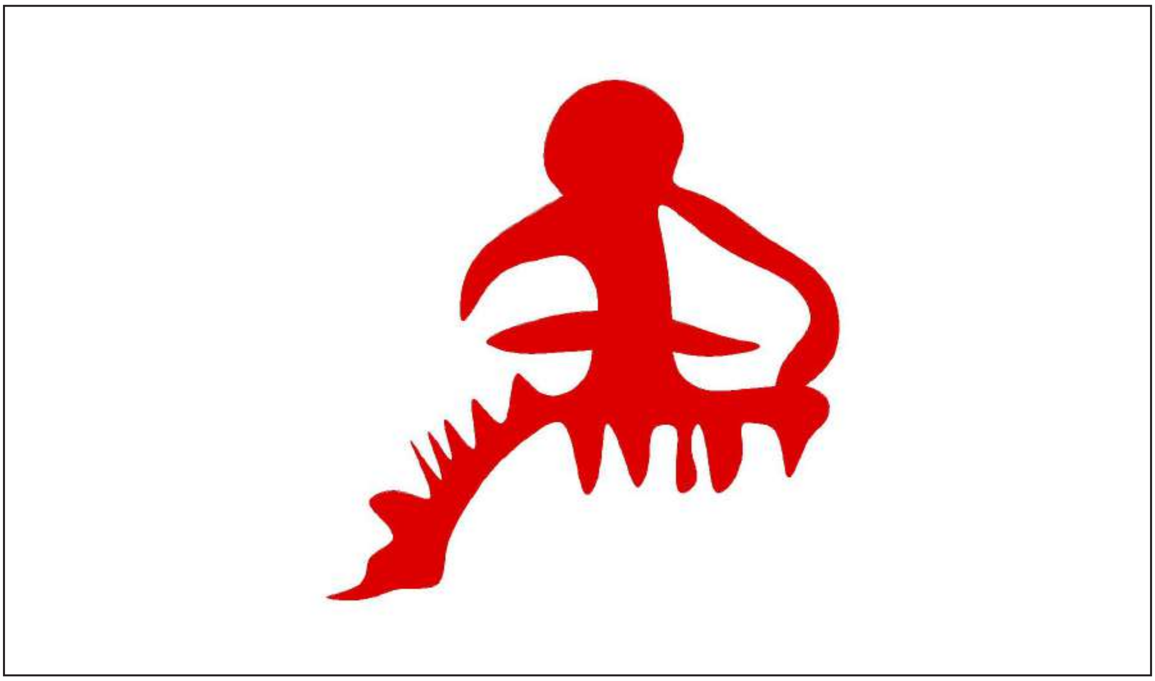


Fig. 4.3.14b Human

This panel represents a human figure riding an animal (horse) and the figures are painted in red colour. The figure displayed with elegant structure but the exterior is not clear (Figs. 4.3.14a-4.3.14b).

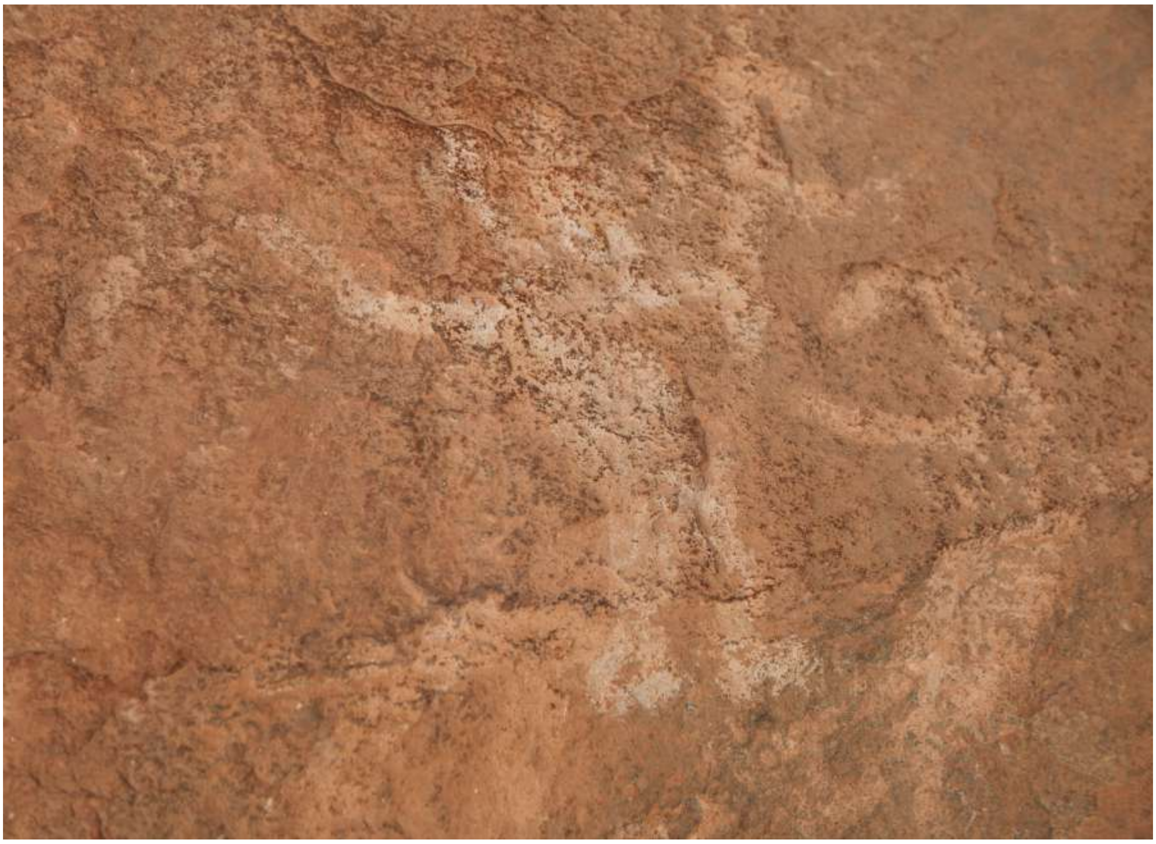


Fig. 4.3.15a Human

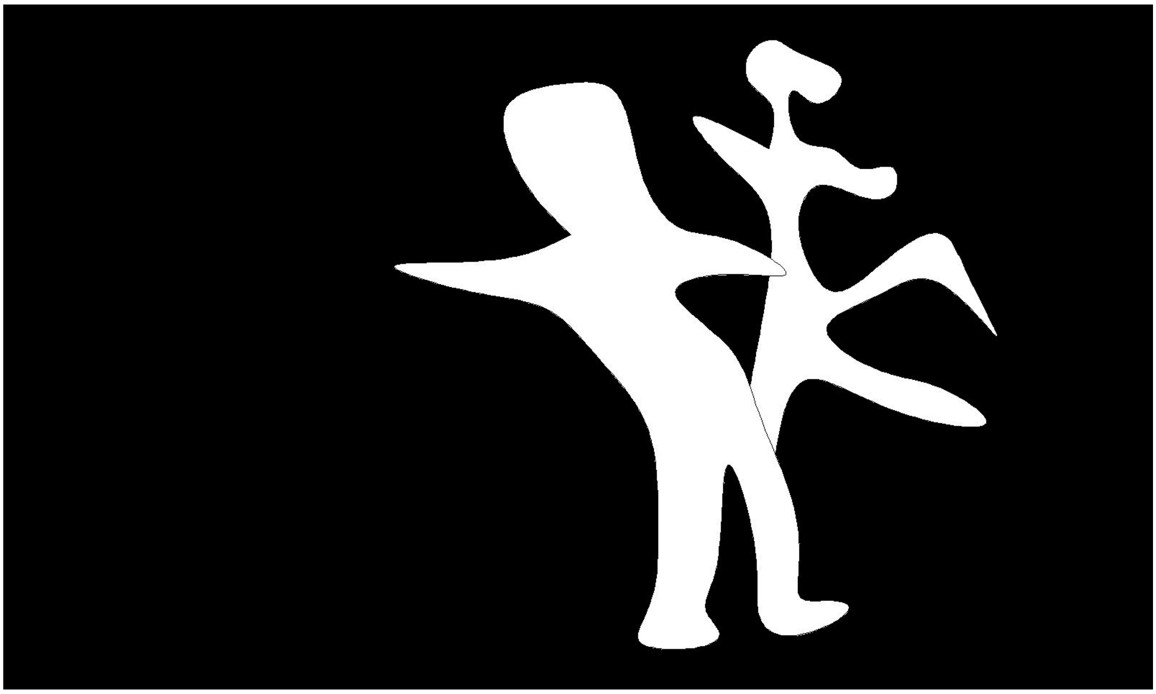


Fig. 4.3.15b Human

This panel portrayed a human figure holding a spear-like weapon in one hand and an animal-like figure opposite to the human (Figs. 4.3.15a-4.3.15b). It could be a hunting scene or an event of animal domestication. These figures are painted in white and faded.

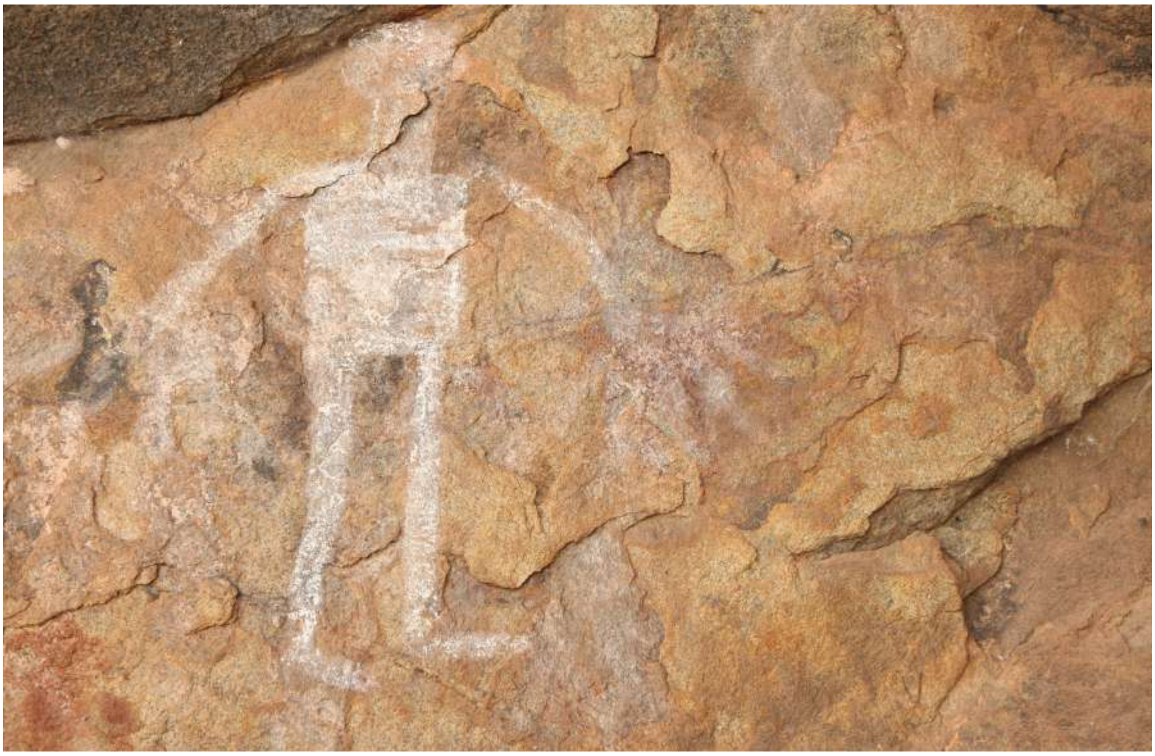


Fig. 4.3.16a Human

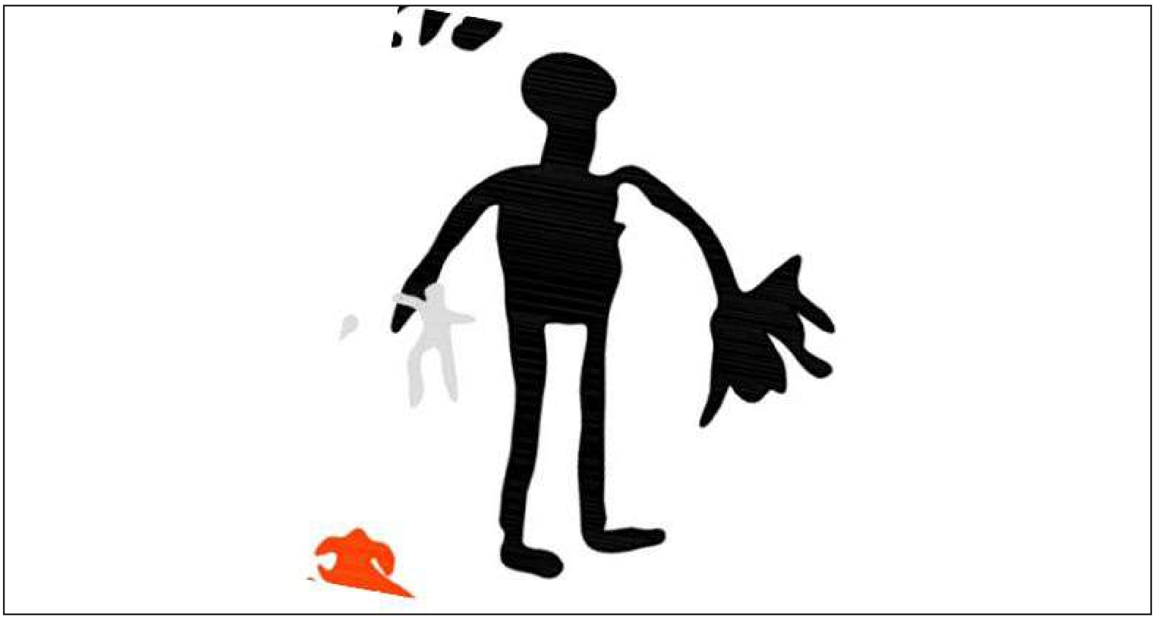


Fig. 4.3.16b Human

In this panel, a human figure is made up of lines with geometric shapes such as squares and circles (Figs. 4.3.16a-4.3.16b). The paintings show the head of the human figure is round and the body is square, the arms and legs are drawn in lines. The fingers are shown extended.

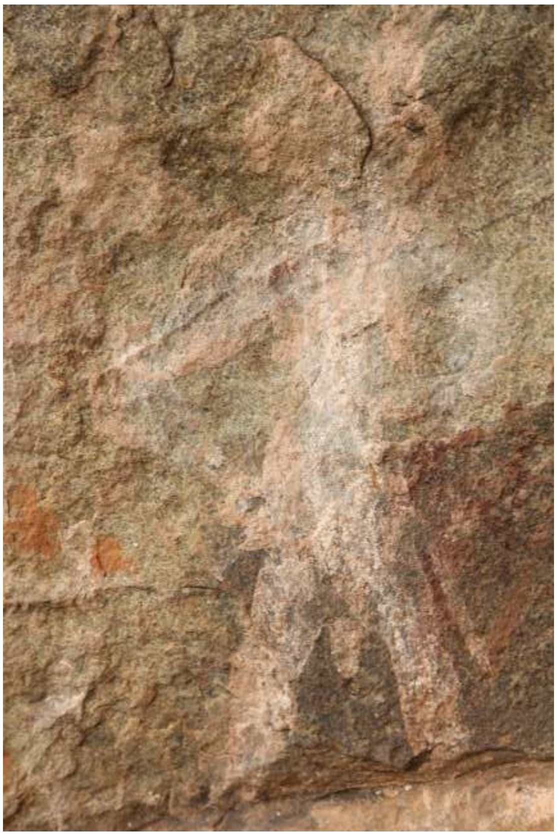


Fig. 4.3.17a Human

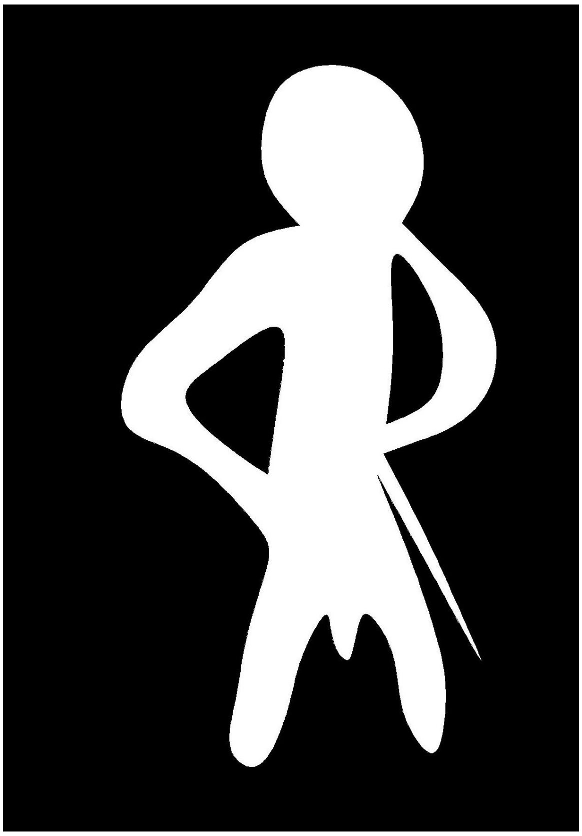


Fig. 4.3.17b Human

This panel depicts a naked human figure and is painted in white colour (Figs. 4.3.17a-4.3.17b). The left arm is placed on the hip with possibly a sword hanging down while the right arm placed at the hip is rather unclear. The projected phallus is shown probably suggesting an ithyphallic.

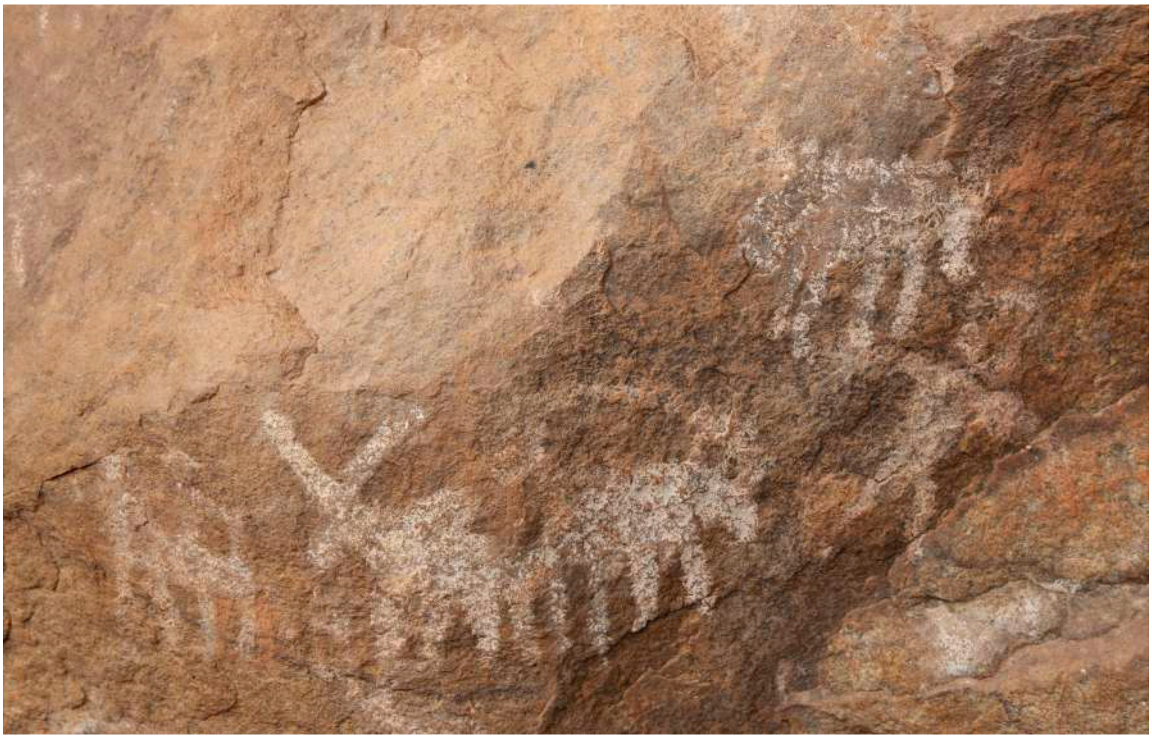


Fig. 4.3.18a Animals Grazing

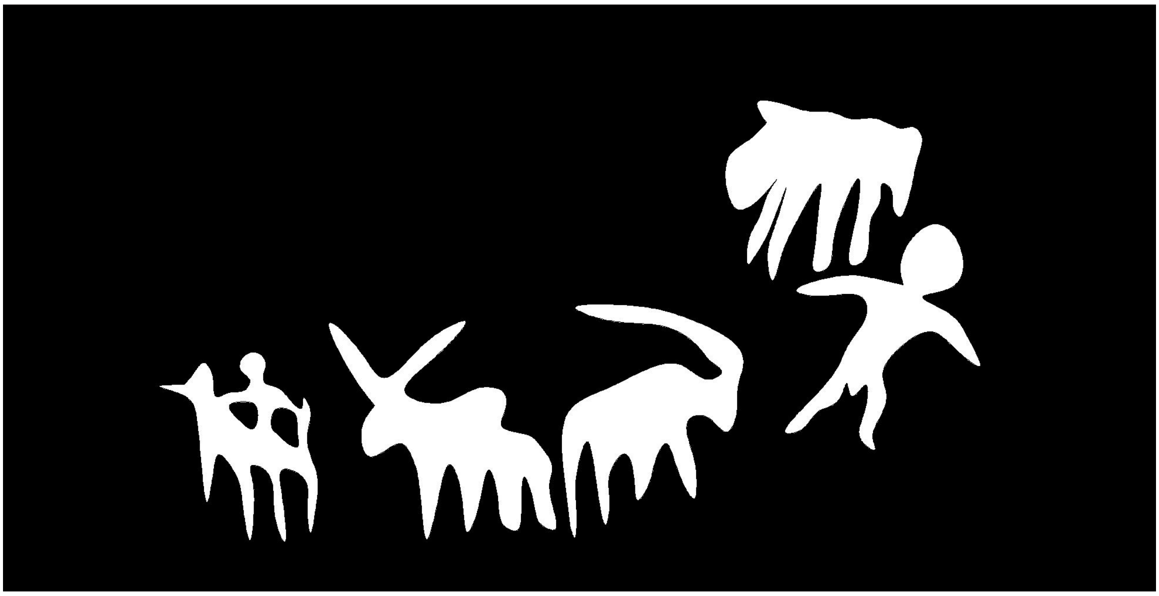


Fig. 4.3.18b Animals Grazing

This painted panel shows four deers painted in white (Figs. 4.3.18a-4.3.18b). On one side of the deer a human figure is painted

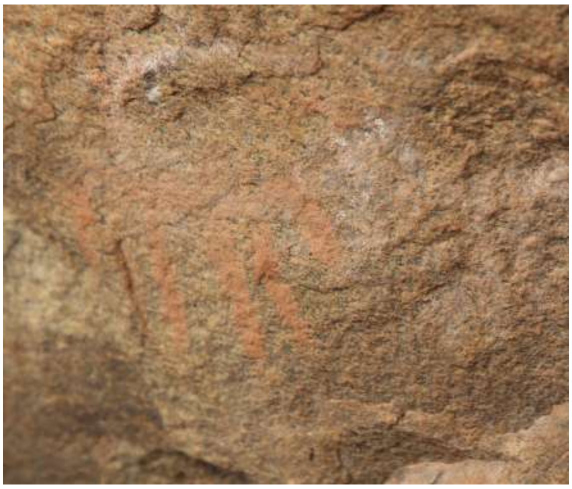


Fig. 4.3.19a Animal

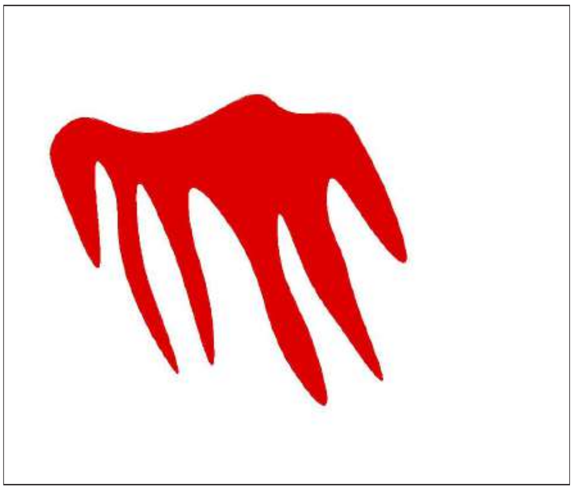


Fig. 4.3.19b Animal

This panel depicts a horse-like animal (Figs. 4.3.19a-4.3.19b). It is painted in red colour and faded.

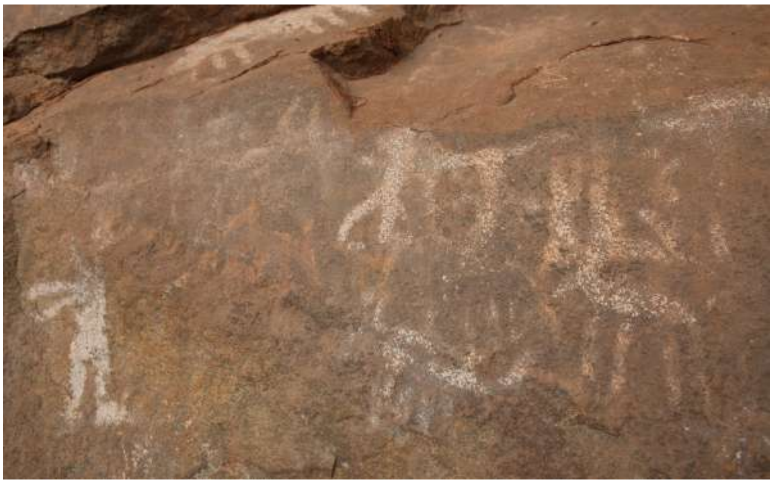


Fig. 4.3.20a Human and animal

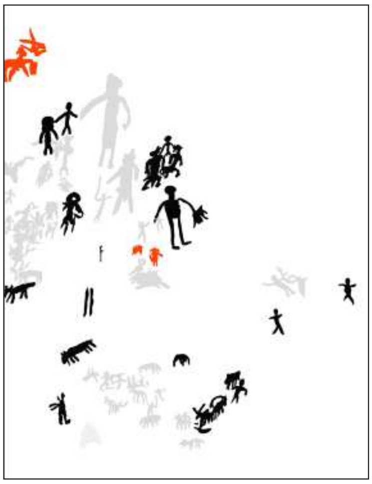


Fig. 4.3.20b Human and animal

This panel shows two humans engaged in hunting a deer and other animals; painted in white colour and these paintings are drawn in lines (Figs. 4.3.20a-4.3.20b).

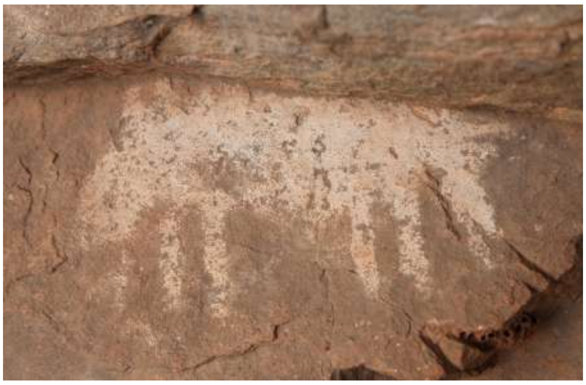


Fig. 4.3.21a Animal

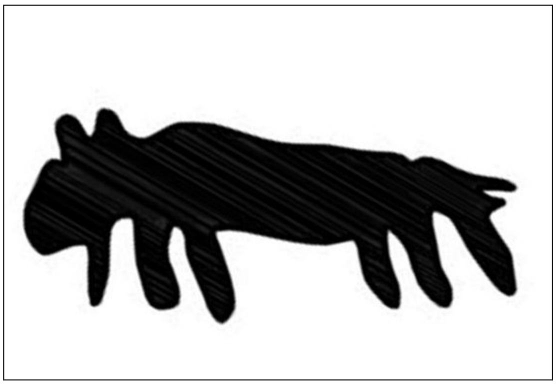


Fig. 4.3.21b Animal

This panel depicts a horse-like animal in white. Initially, this painting was outlined and later filled with white colour (Figs. 4.3.21a-4.3.21b).

This panel below comprises five human figures painted in white colour. The human figures were drawn in a comparatively larger size than other human figures (Figs. 4.3.22a-4.3.22b). The two anterior human figures wear a turban.

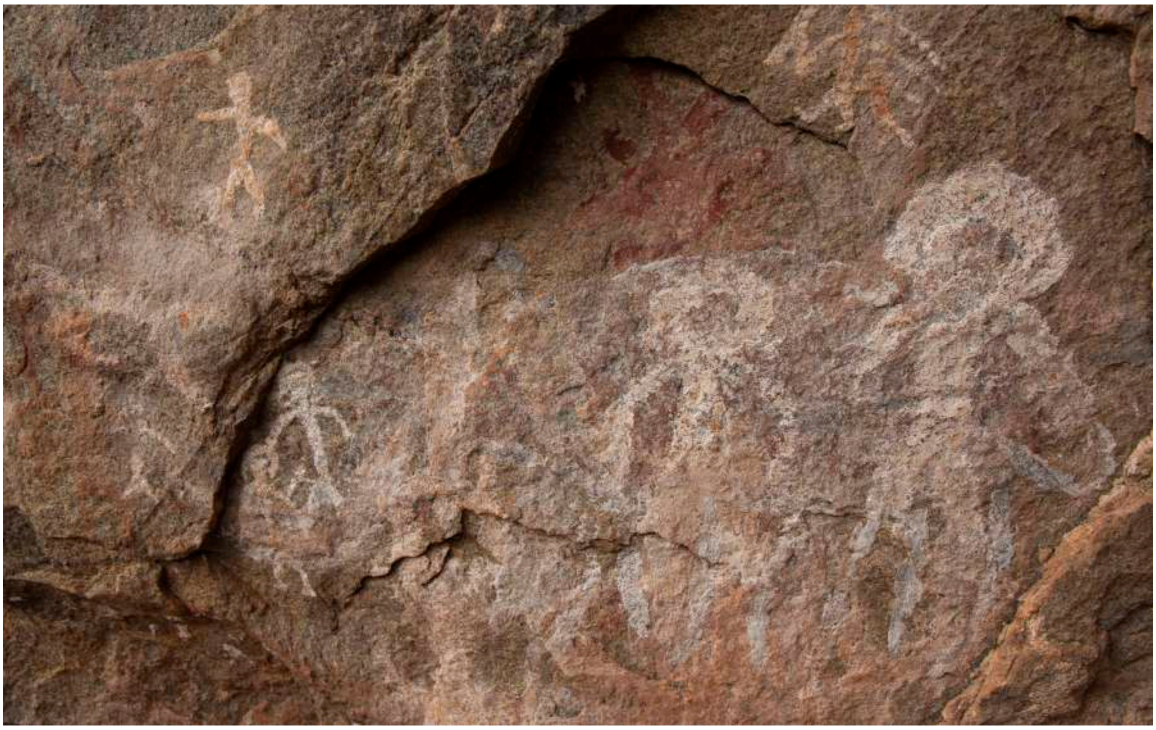


Fig. 4.3.22a Humans

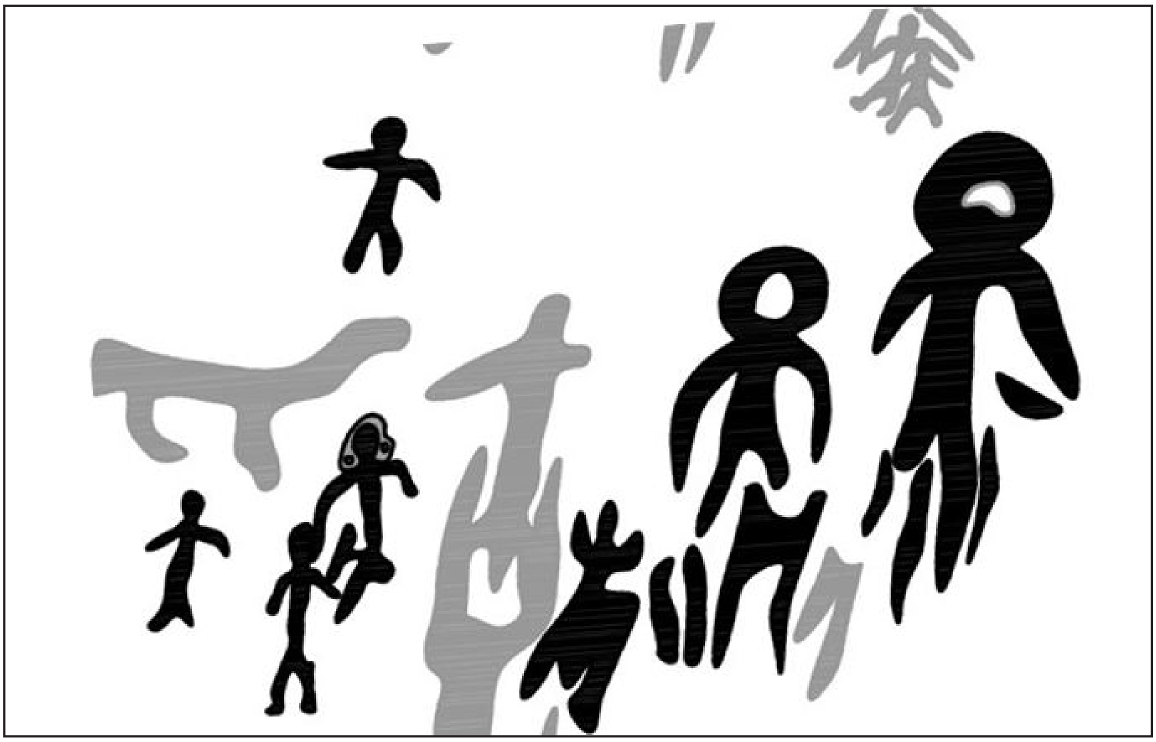


Fig. 4.3.22b Humans

This panel (Figs. 4.3.23a-4.3.23b) shows three human figures painted in white. The hand movements of these three people are shown to be identical and these figures are shown in walking position.

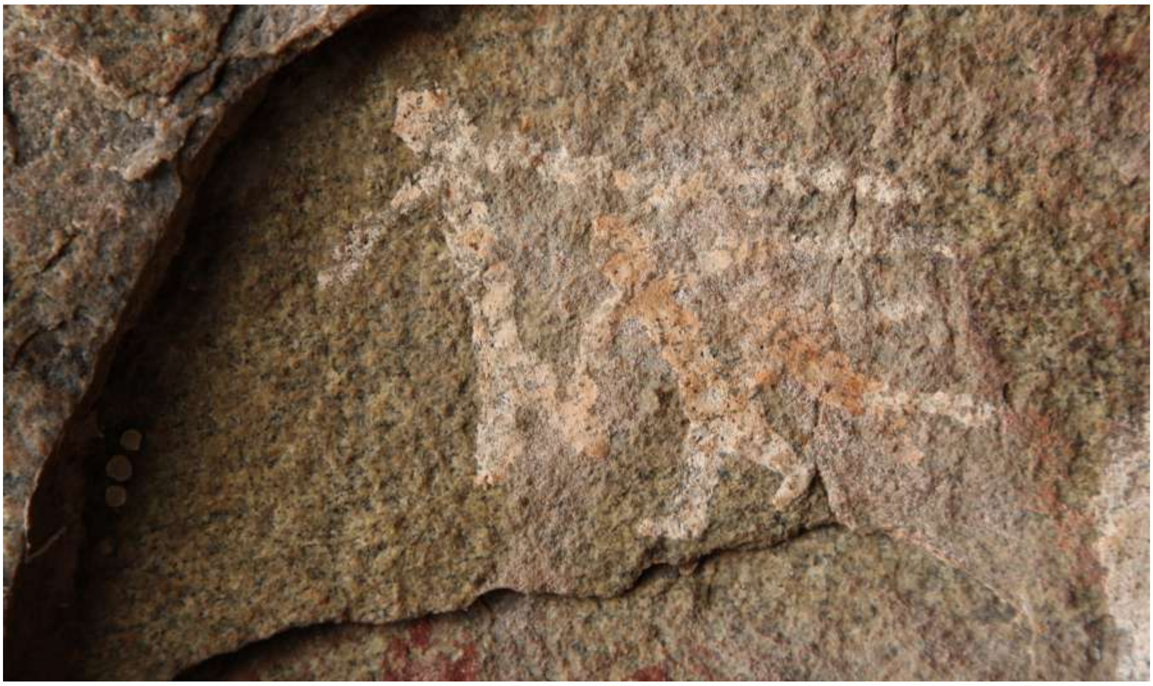


Fig. 4.3.23a Family

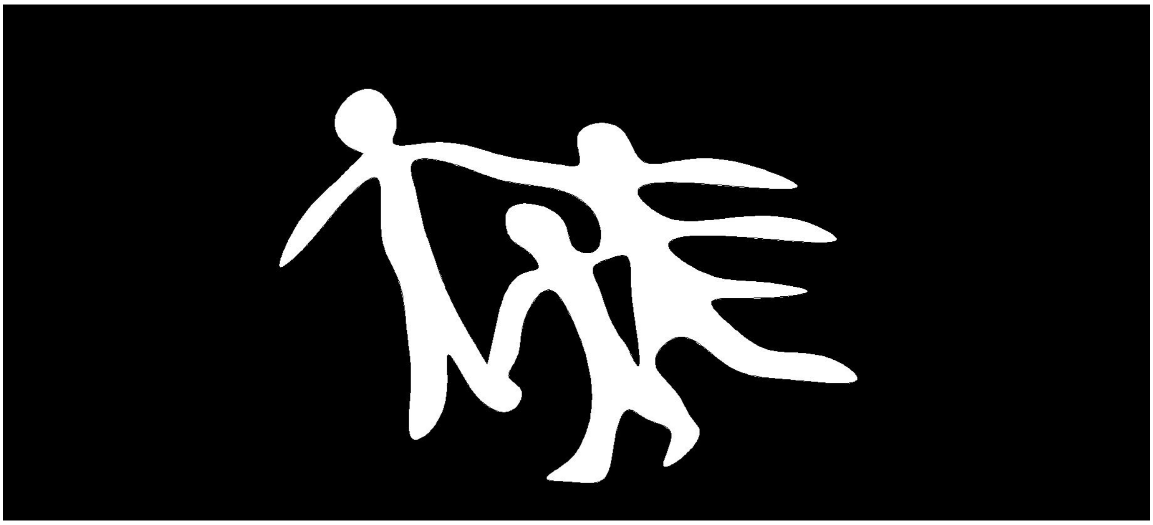


Fig. 4.3.23b Family

This (Figs. 4.3.24a-4.3.24b) panel is in the centre of the gallery. Here, a human figure with a crown on his head and riding on an animal (horse) attracts our attention. The figure is painted in red colour. More than four human figures are painted in white around the red human figure. They have a long stick in their hands. The scene possibly depicts a tribal leader riding a horse and his guards around him. The artist distinguishes

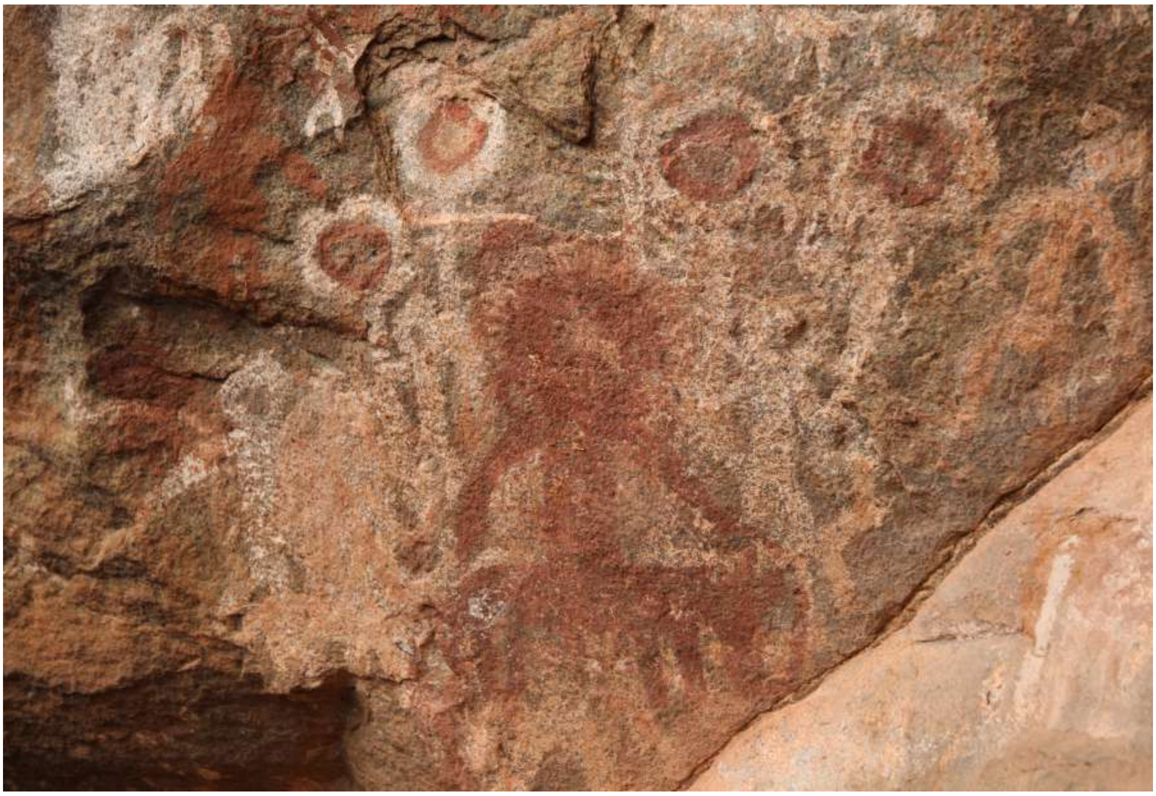


Fig. 4.3.24a Leader and followers

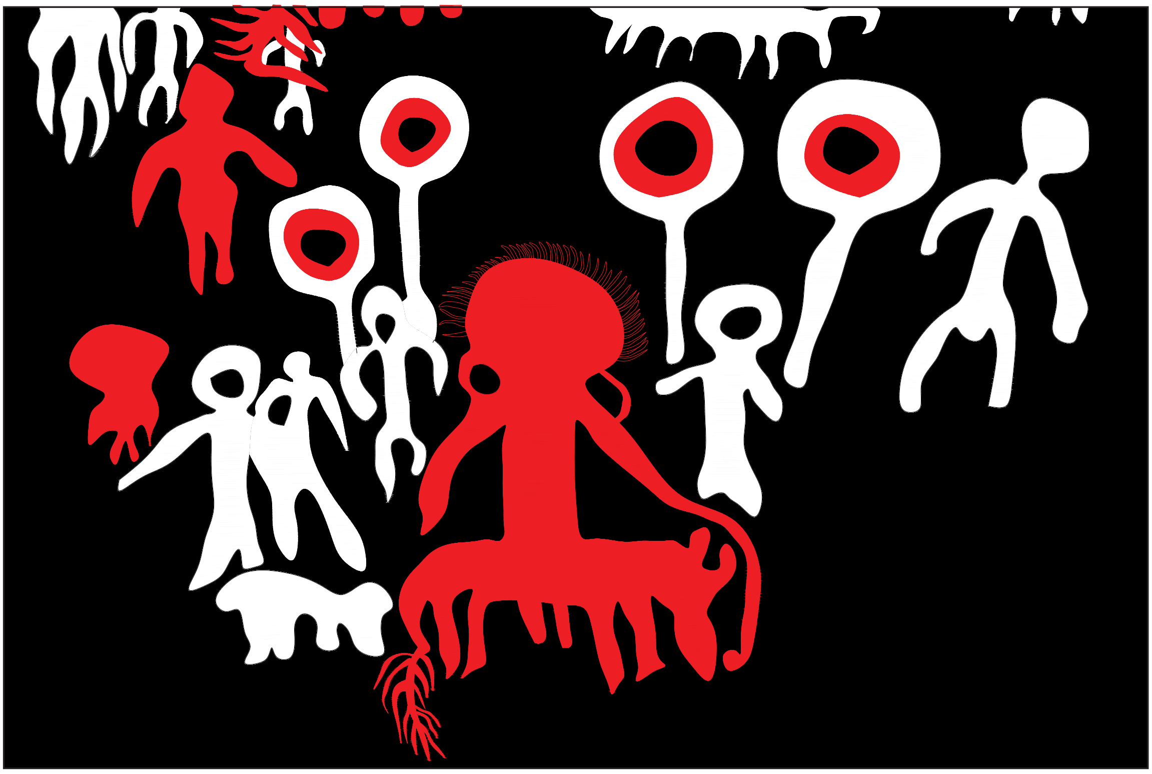


Fig. 4.3.24b Leader and followers

the central red figure from the rest who are painted in white.

This panel (Figs. 4.3.25a-4.3.25b) depicts five human figures in white. These

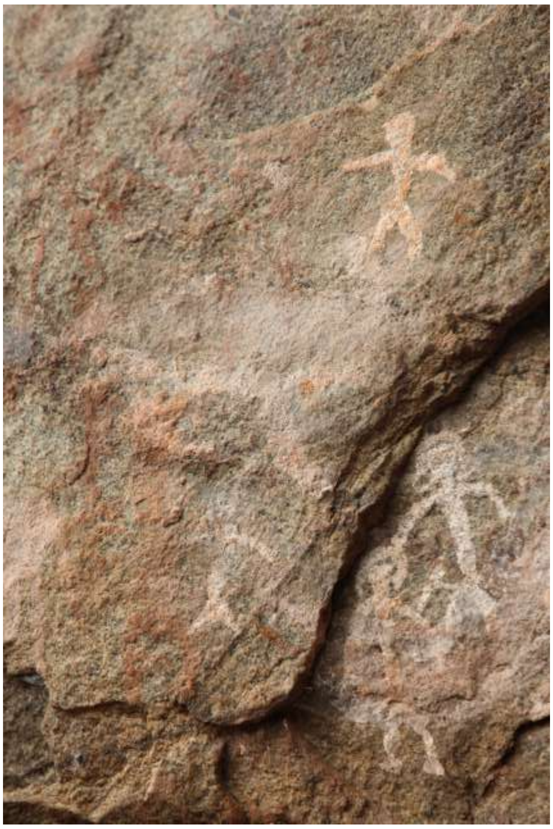


Fig. 4.3.25a Humans

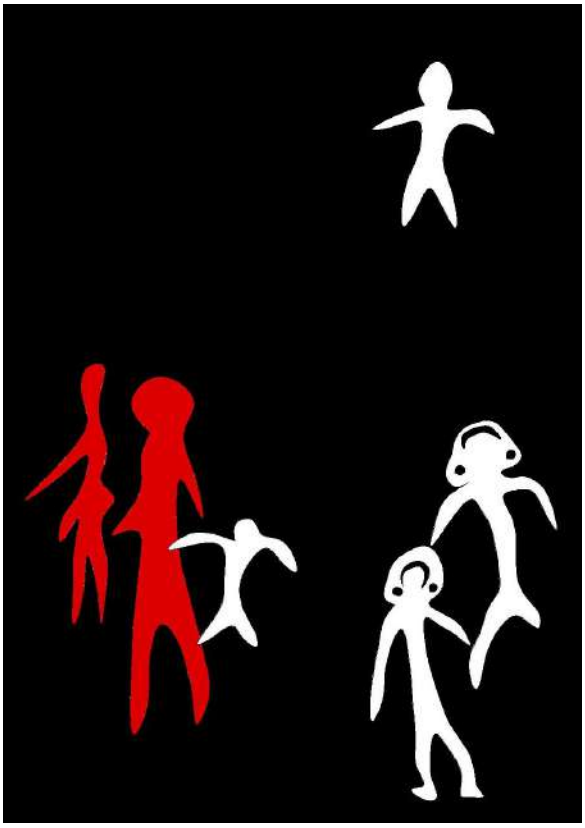


Fig. 4.3.25b Humans

images are shown as though marching away. The bottom two figures are painted with headgear.

This panel (Figs. 4.3.26a-4.3.26b) shows two human figures, painted in white. The first person is shown with a headgear and another human figure shown without it. Both figures are shown in marching position.

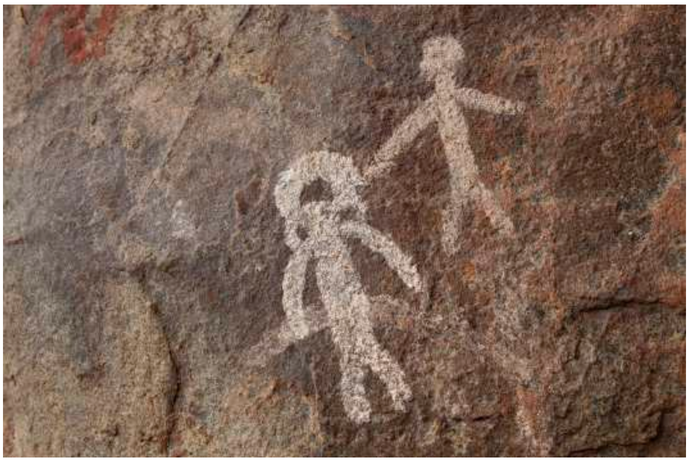


Fig. 4.3.26a Leader and followers

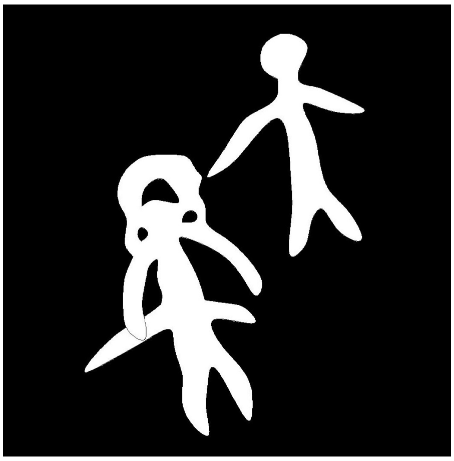


Fig. 4.3.26b Leader and followers

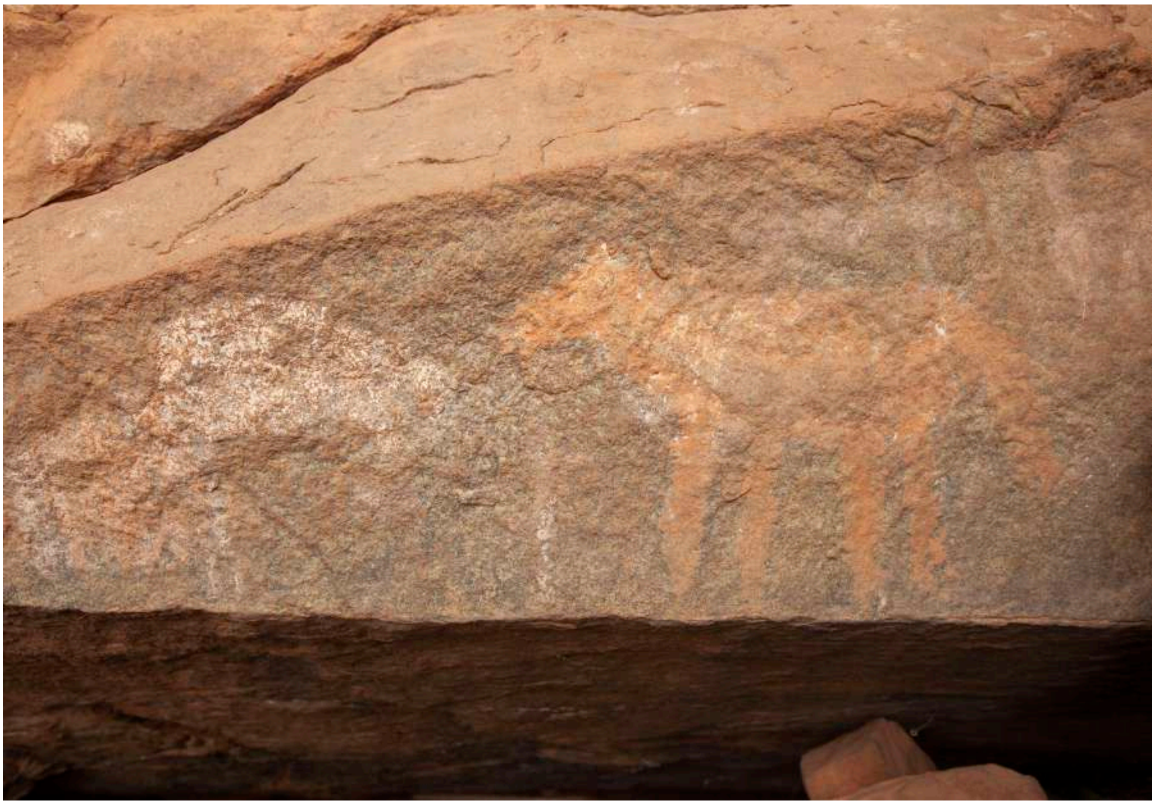


Fig. 4.3.27a Animals

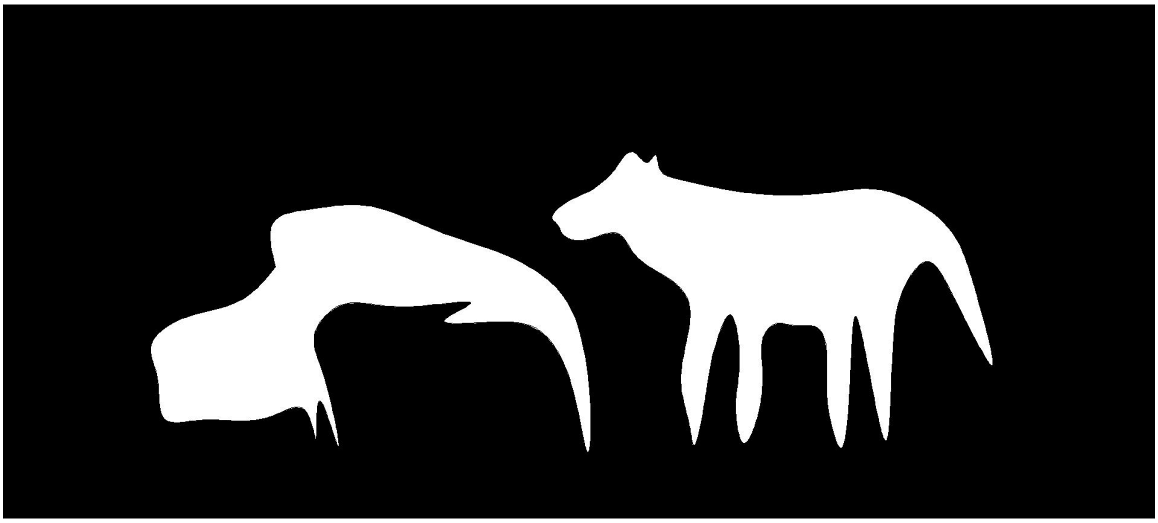
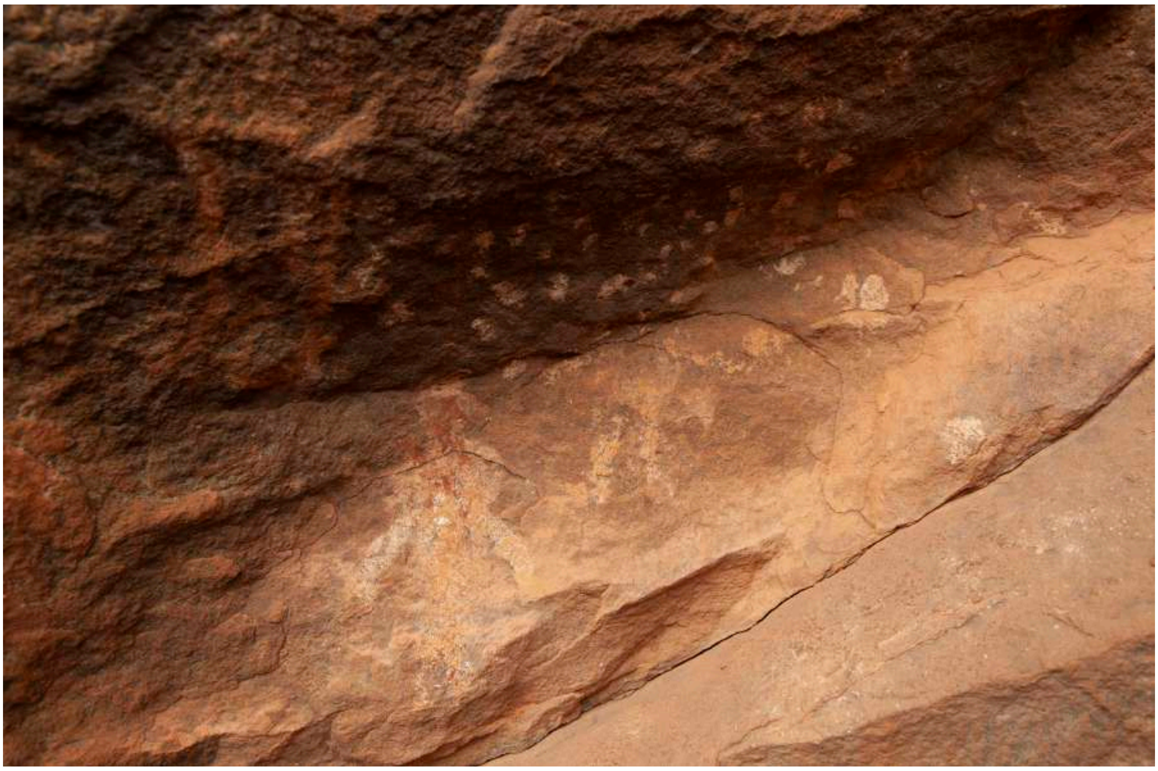


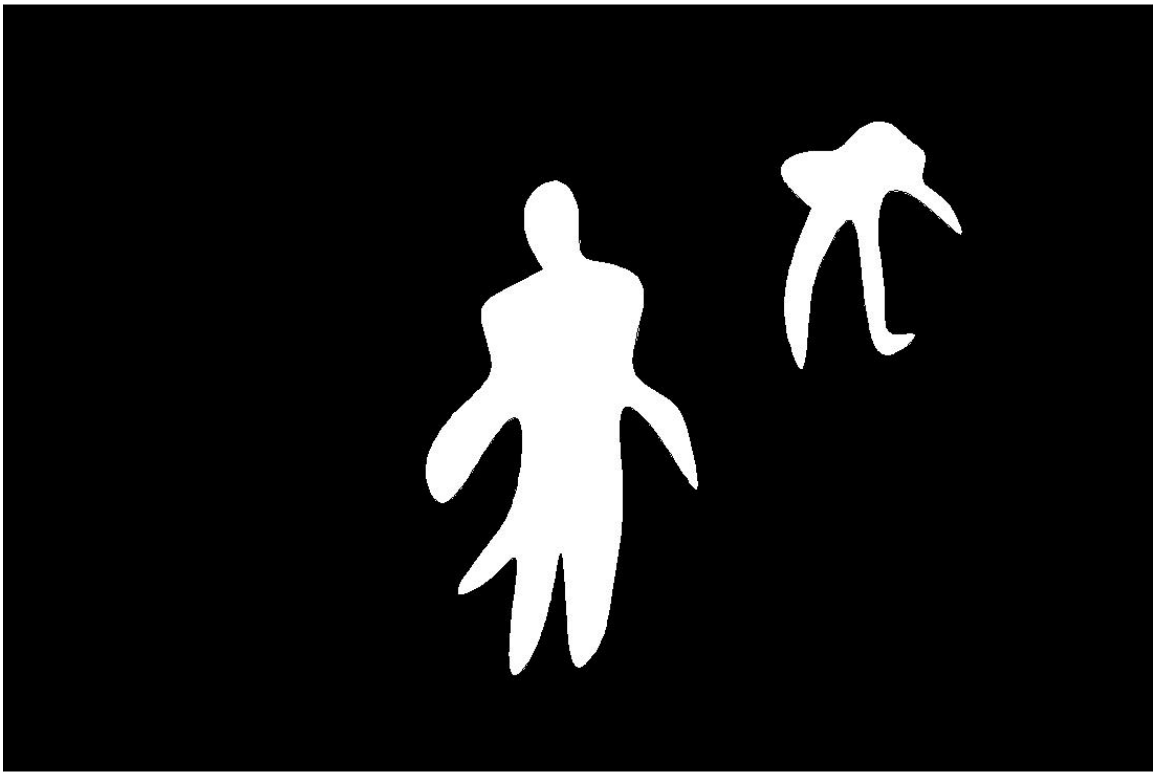
Fig. 4.3.27b Animals

This painting (Figs. 4.3.27a-4.3.27b) shows the horse-like animal and it is first painted in white and then red colour painted on top of it.

This panel (Figs. 4.3.28a-4.3.28b) depicts two human figures shown in walking position, it is painted in white colour.



▸ *Fig. 4.3.28a Locomotion of two human*



▸ *Fig. 4.3.28b Locomotion of two human*

One of the human figures (Figs. 4.3.29a-4.3.29b) is drawn large and painted in white. The head is shown in a circular shape. The left arm is bent and the right arm is extended. At the foot of the figure a small human figure is shown and the waist another small human figure is shown, and between these two figures another figure painted in white. It looks like one human figure is showing big and three figures are small.

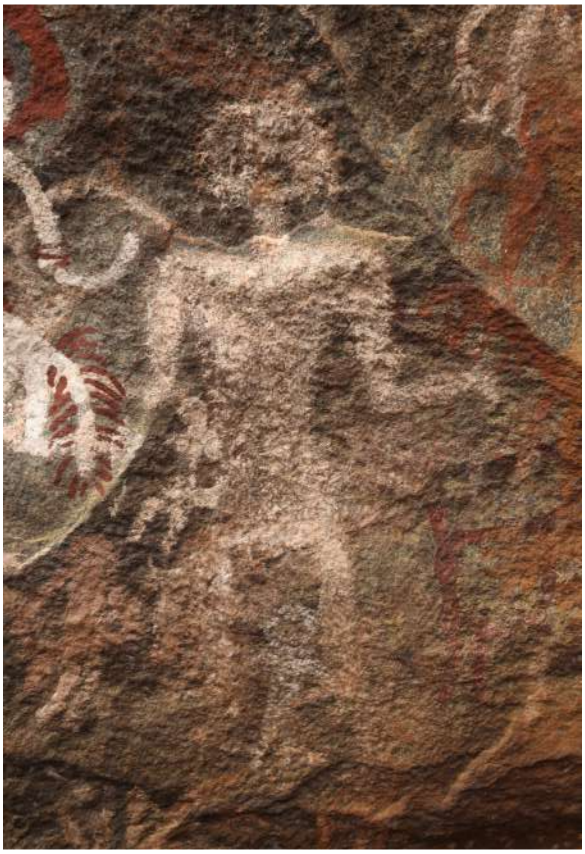


Fig. 4.3.29a Human

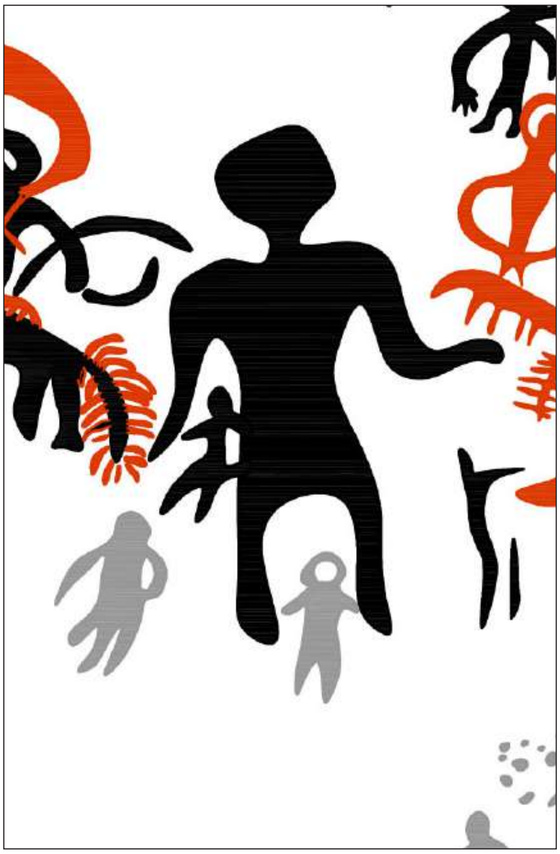


Fig. 4.3.29b Human

In this (Figs. 4.3.30a-4.3.30b) panel six human figures are shown engaged in different functions. The figures are painted in white as simple sketches. It looks like a fighting scene between two groups.

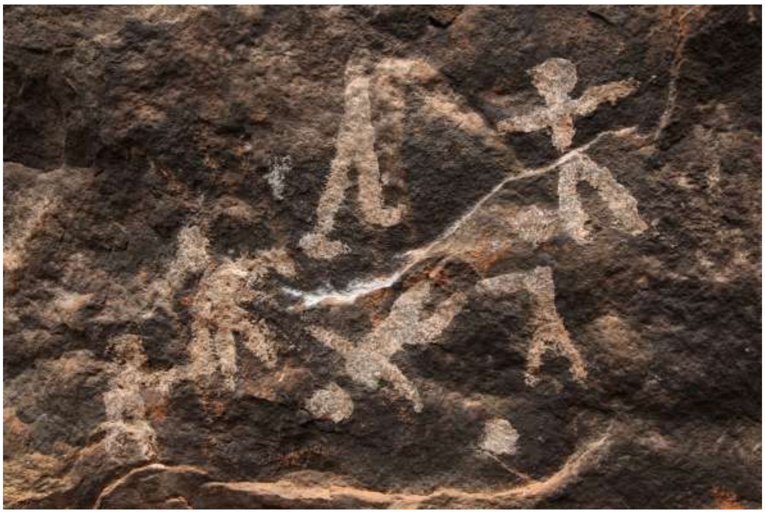


Fig. 4.3.30a Fighting scene

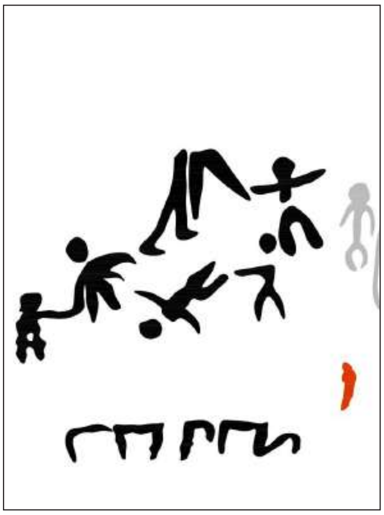


Fig. 4.3.30b Fighting scene

This (Figs. 4.3.31a-4.3.31b) panel shows a human figure riding the horse-like animal, it is painted in white. The head of the animal is damaged

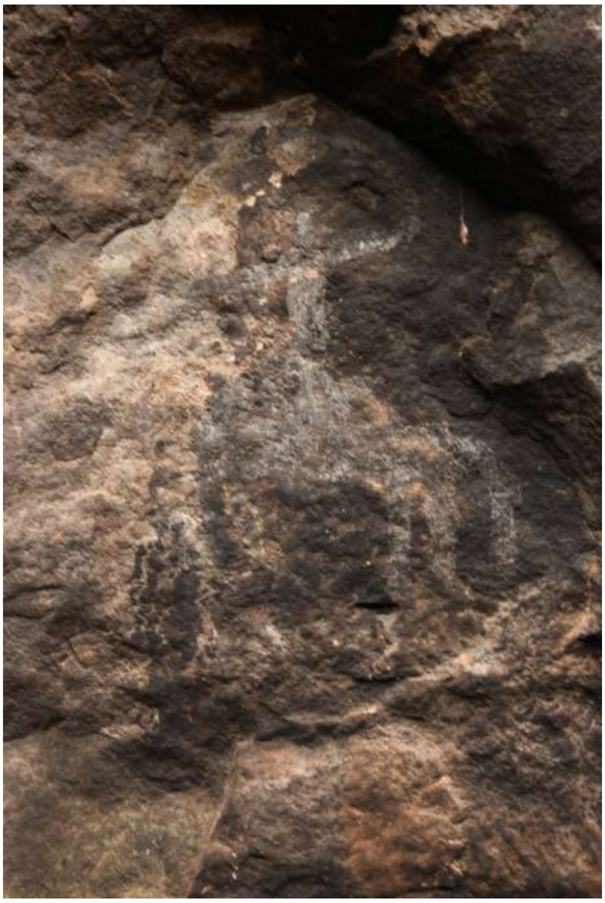


Fig. 4.3.31a Animal riding

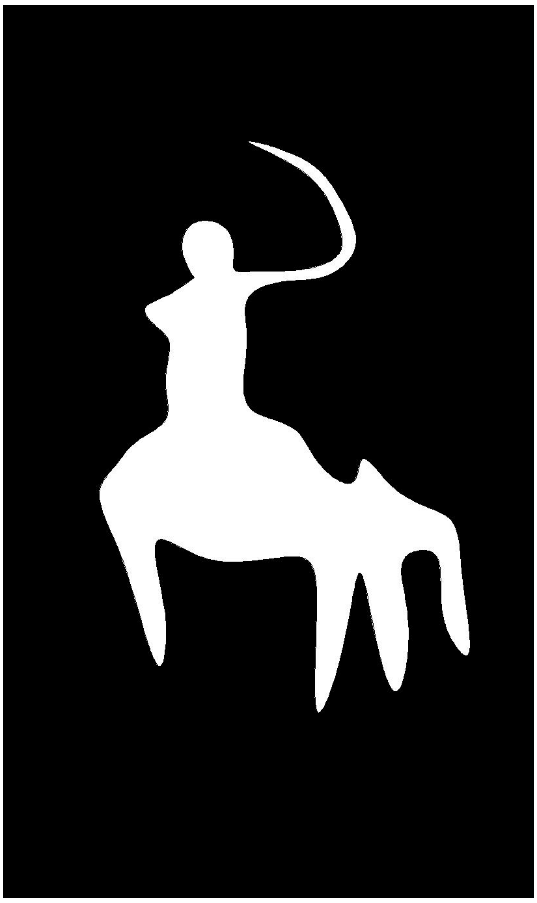


Fig. 4.3.31b Animal riding

The painting (Figs. 4.3.32a-4.3.32b). depicts human and animal figures in white. About six human figures are seen and it is shown in marching positions.

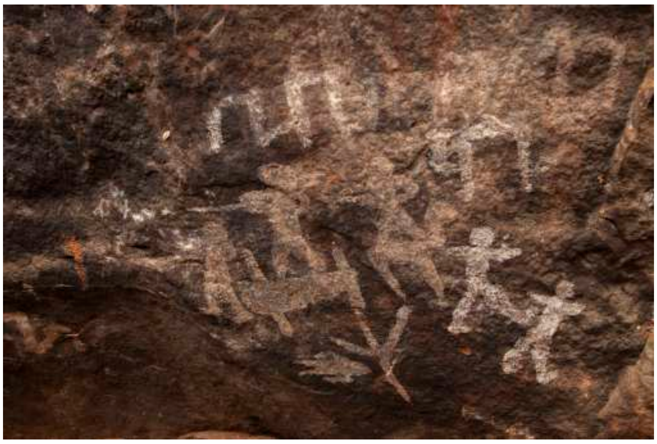


Fig. 4.3.32a Dancing scene

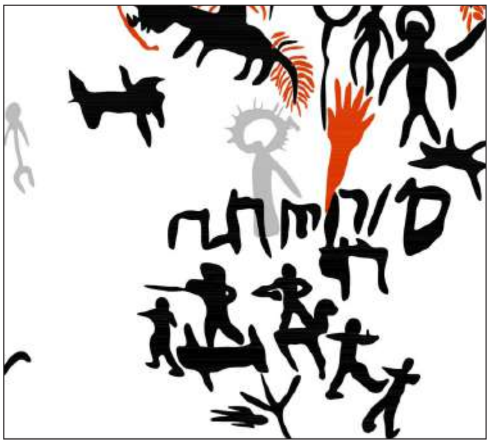


Fig. 4.3.32b Dancing scene

This panel (Figs. 4.3.33a-4.3.33b) shows the human figure with one hand outstretched; the whole body is painted in white

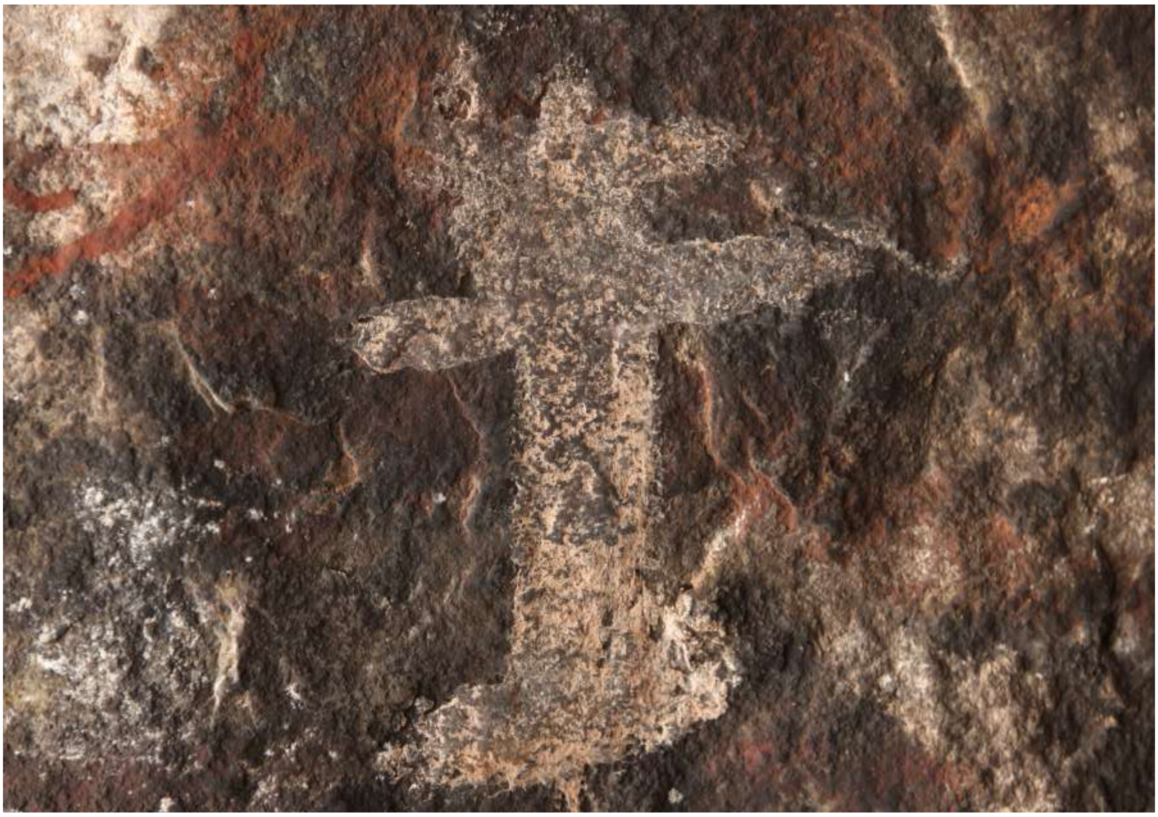


Fig. 4.3.33a Human

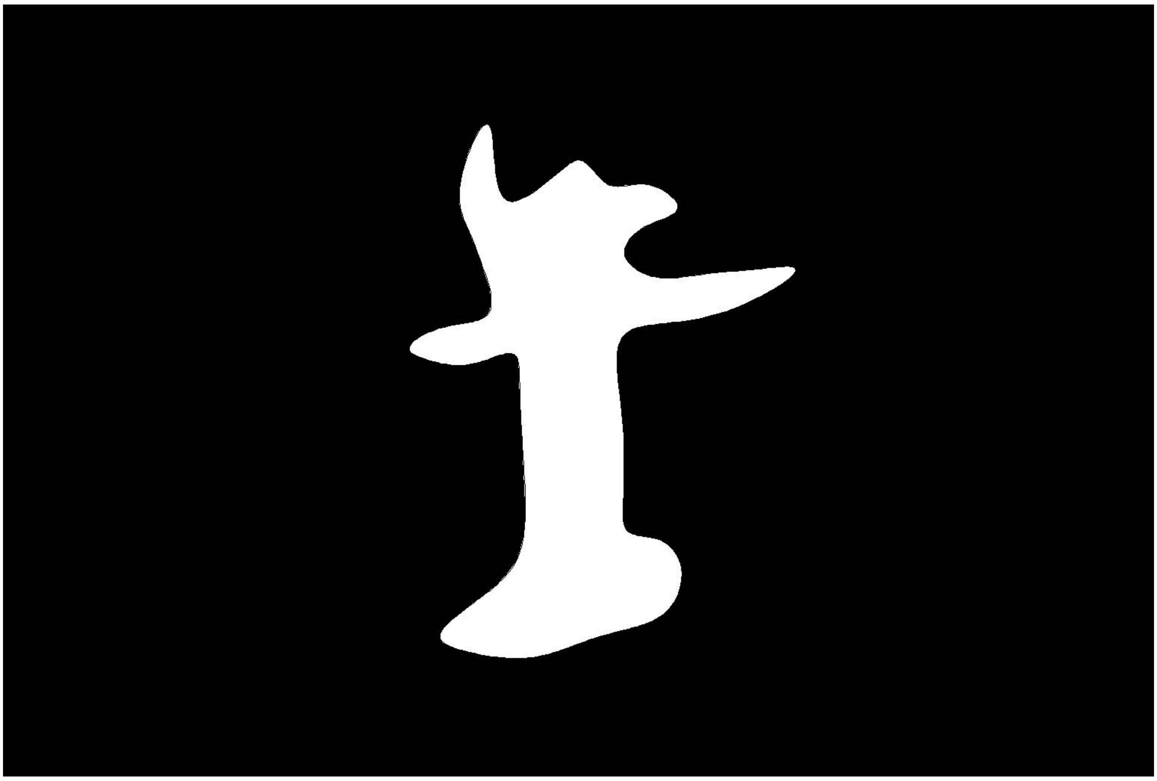


Fig. 4.3.33b Human

This panel depicts the cow-like animal ter. It is painted in white colour and the animal is drawn with very simple basic lines (Figs. 4.3.34a-4.3.34b).

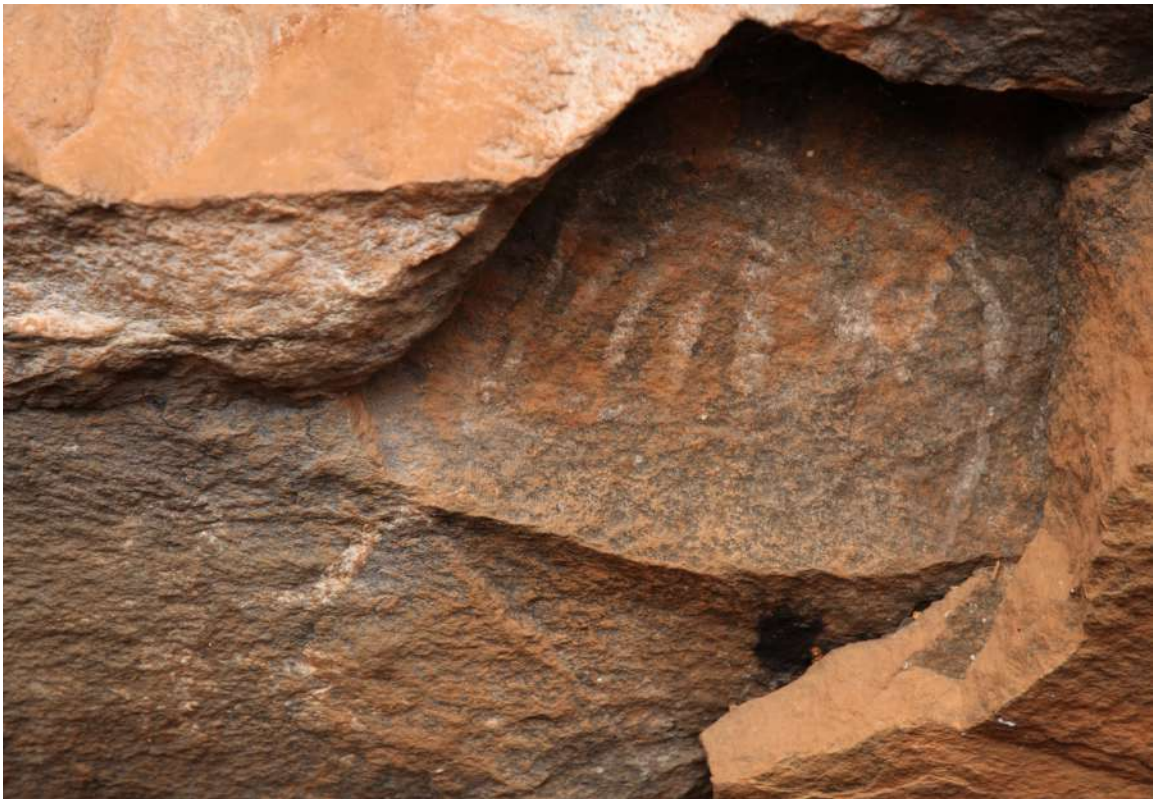


Fig. 4.3.34a Animal

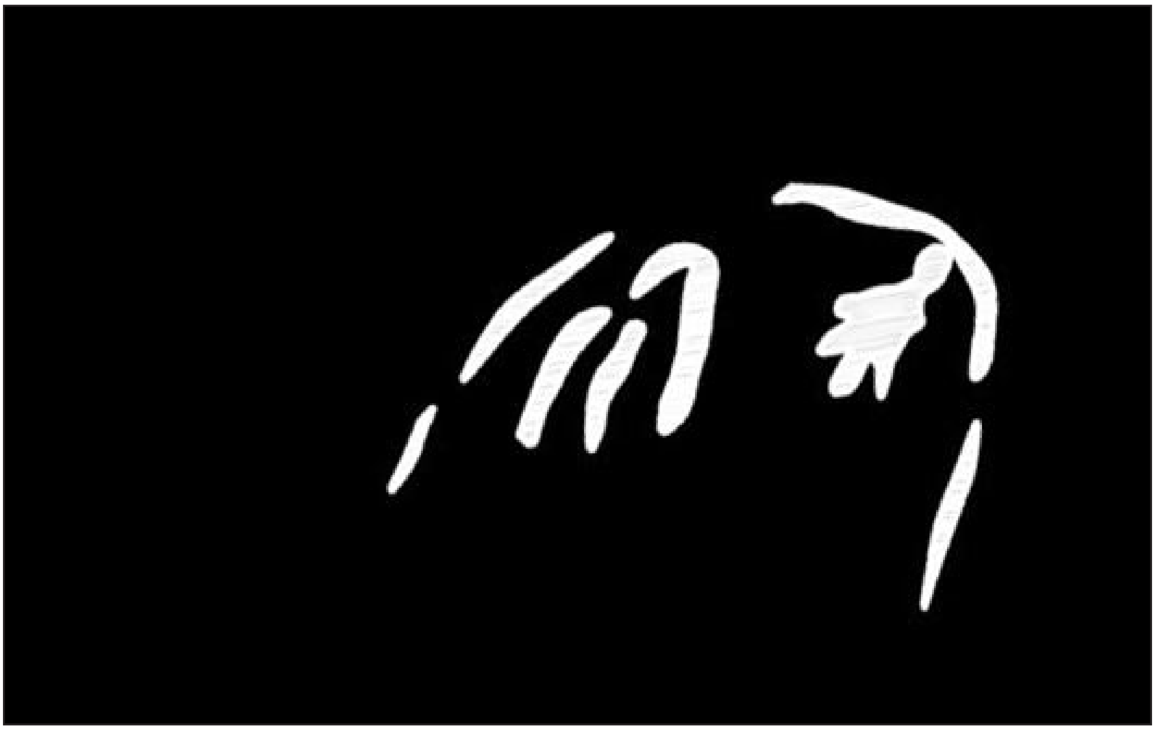


Fig. 4.3.34b Animal

This painting has a human-like figure which is shown in motion (Figs. 4.3.35a-4.3.35b). The painting is drawn using simple lines.

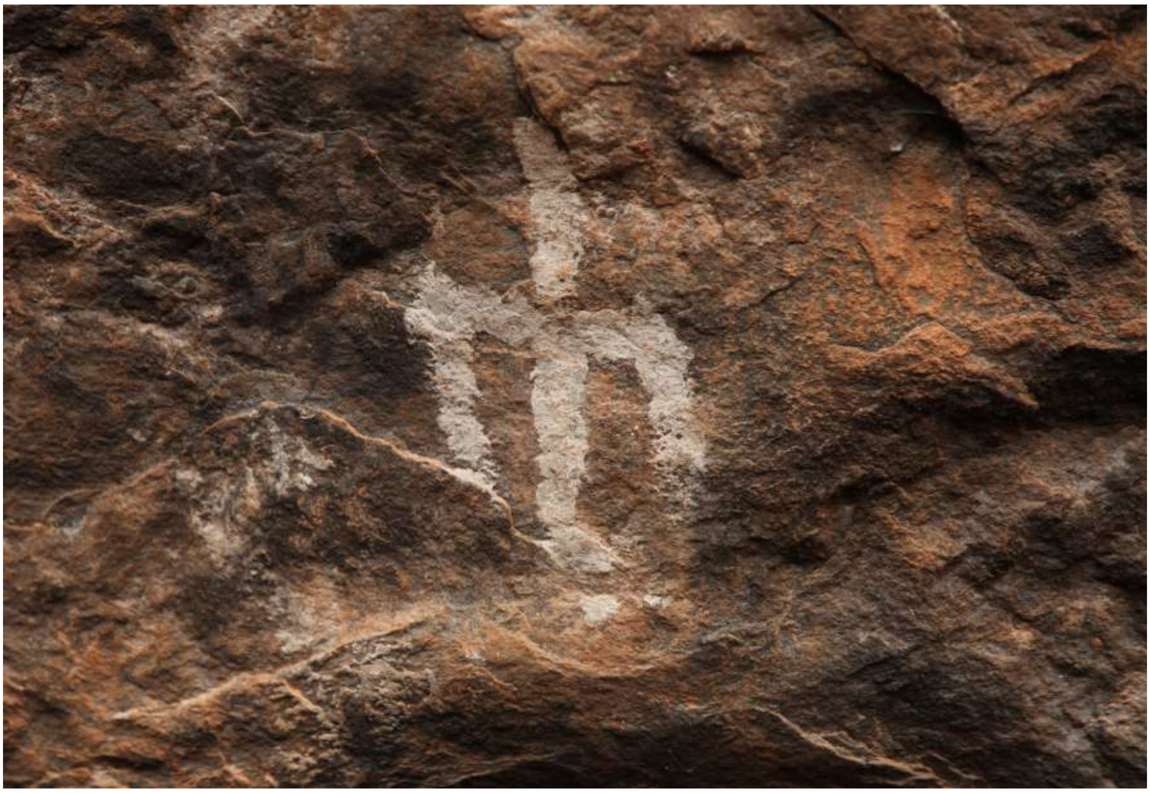


Fig. 4.3.35a Human

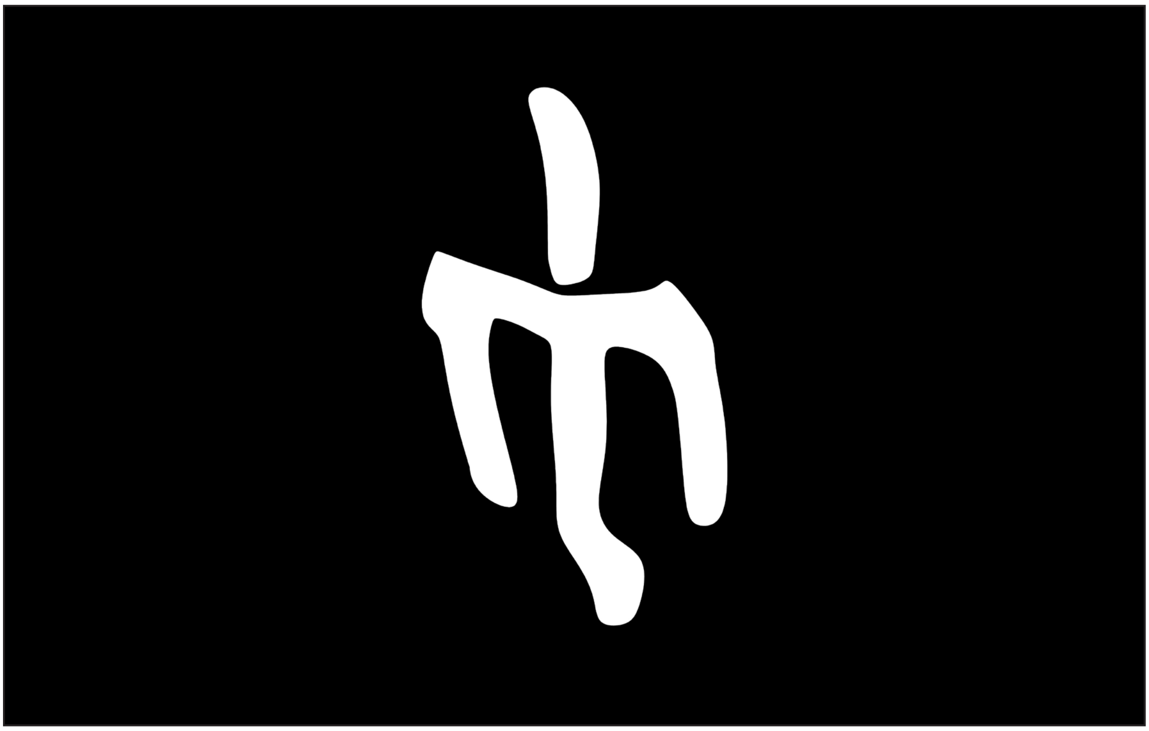


Fig. 4.3.35b Human

This panel (Figs. 4.3.36a-4.3.36b) depicts the figure of a deer; it is painted in red colour. The figure of a deer is small and it is painted neatly and realistically drawn. The figure of the deer is first drawn in line then painted in the required places inside the deer.

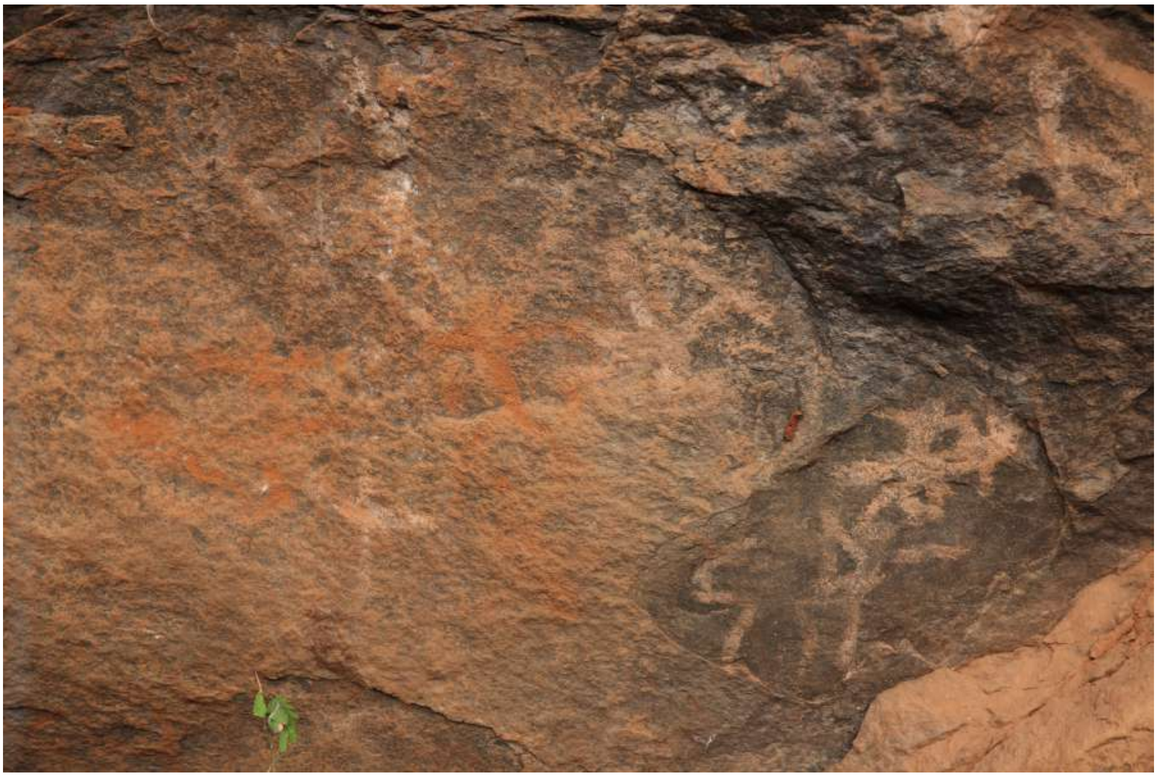


Fig. 4.3.36a Animals

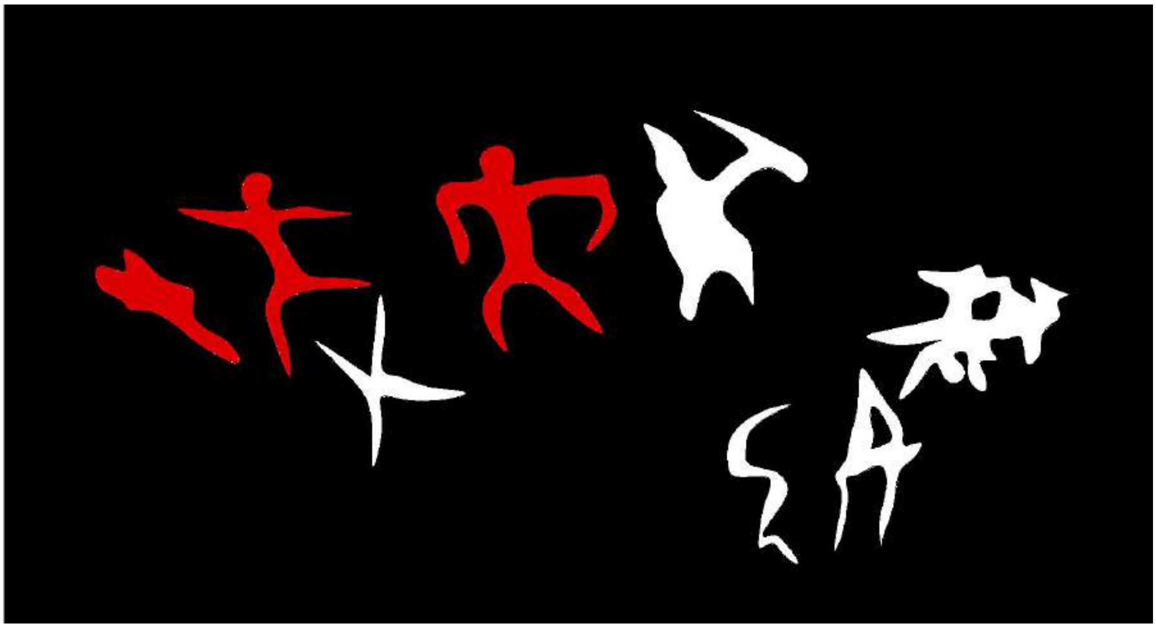


Fig. 4.3.36b Animals

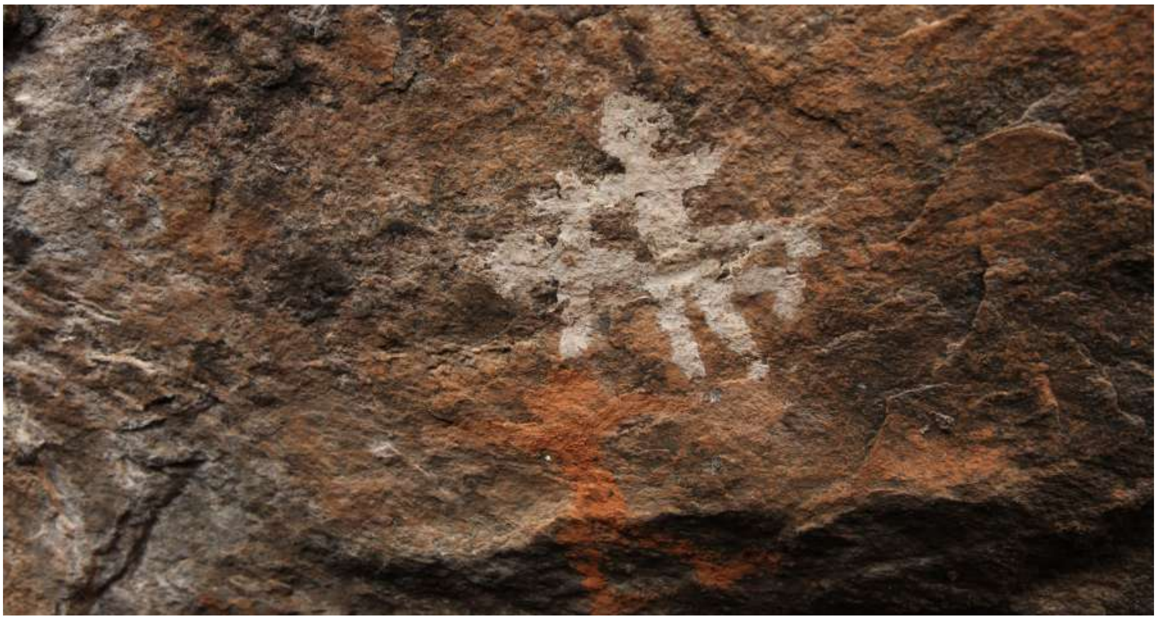


Fig. 4.3.37a Erotic scene

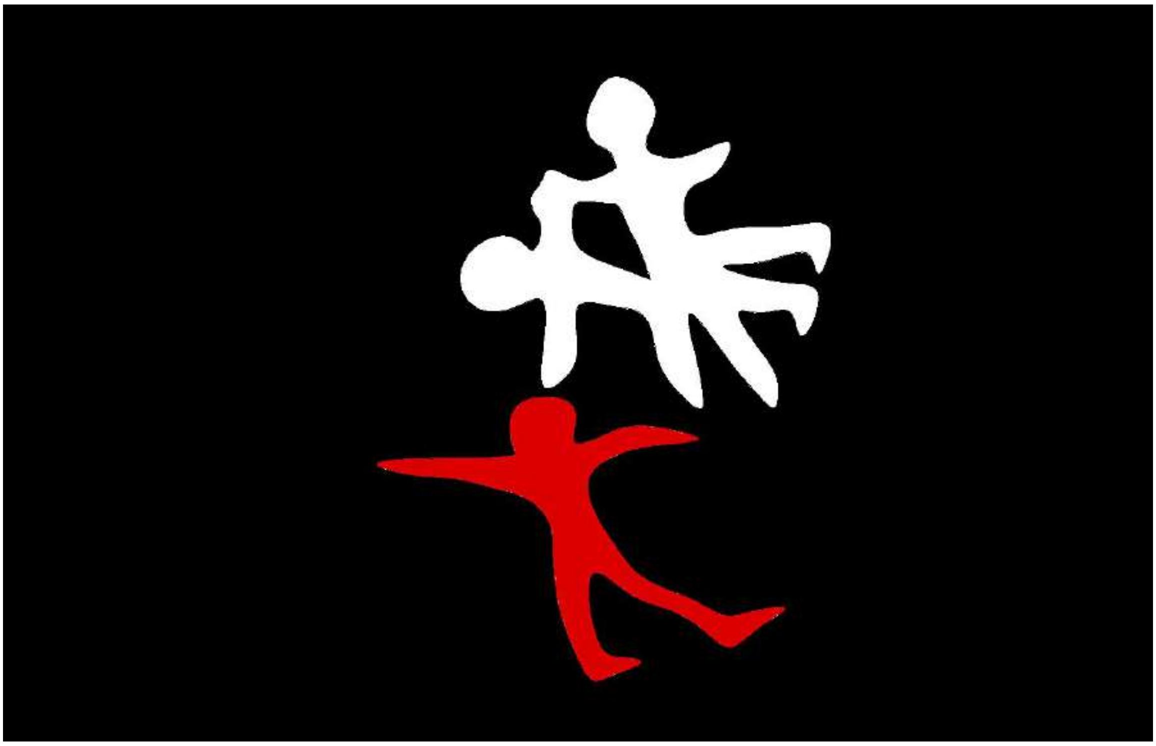


Fig. 4.3.37b Erotic scene

In this painting, two human figures are painted in white (Figs. 4.3.37a-4.3.37b). One figure is standing and the other figure is seen lying or about to fall, but is helped by the standing person. Below these two figures is another human figure in red body wash.

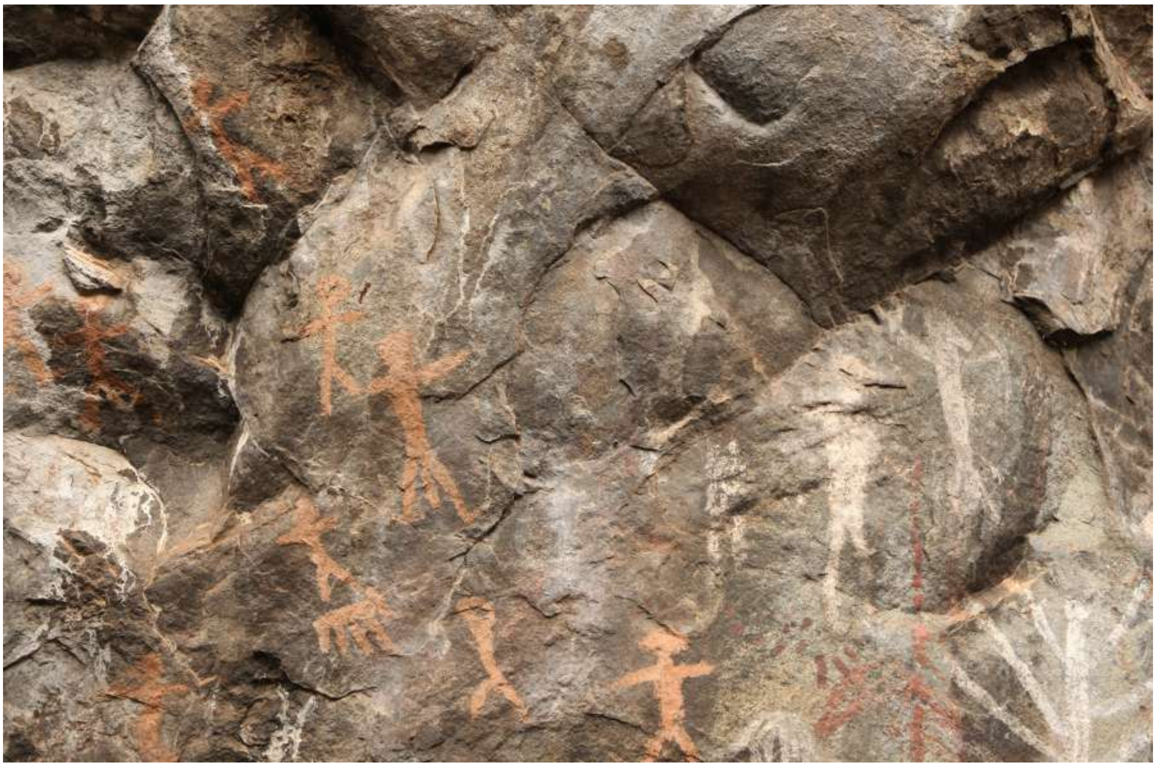


Fig. 4.3.38a Tree and humans

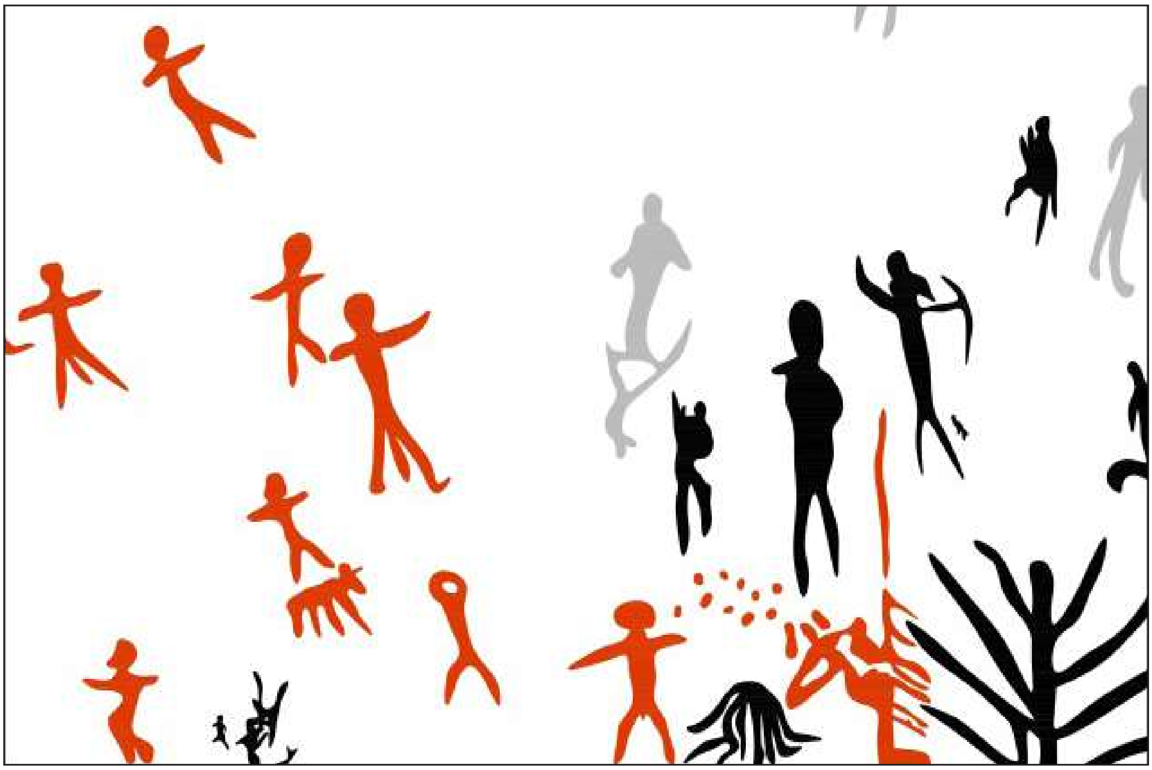


Fig. 4.3.38b Tree and humans

This panel (Figs. 4.3.38a-4.3.38b) depicts nine human figures. They are painted in pink colour as a line drawing. In the centre of the block, a small animal is shown and it may be the image of a deer. These human figures are shown around the animal.

Every human figure is operating at different levels, perhaps ambushing an animal in the game. Joining a herd without weapons may be one of the methods of deer hunting. On the right side of this group of paintings, some human figures are shown in white. Similarly, some unidentified images are found near these paintings it is painted dark red. This painting is painted in two colours two in red and the other one in white.

This panel (Figs. 4.3.39a-4.3.39b) shows more than five human figures depicted in white colour and drawn in lines. According to the scene, it could be a group dance and each figure can be seen in different movements.

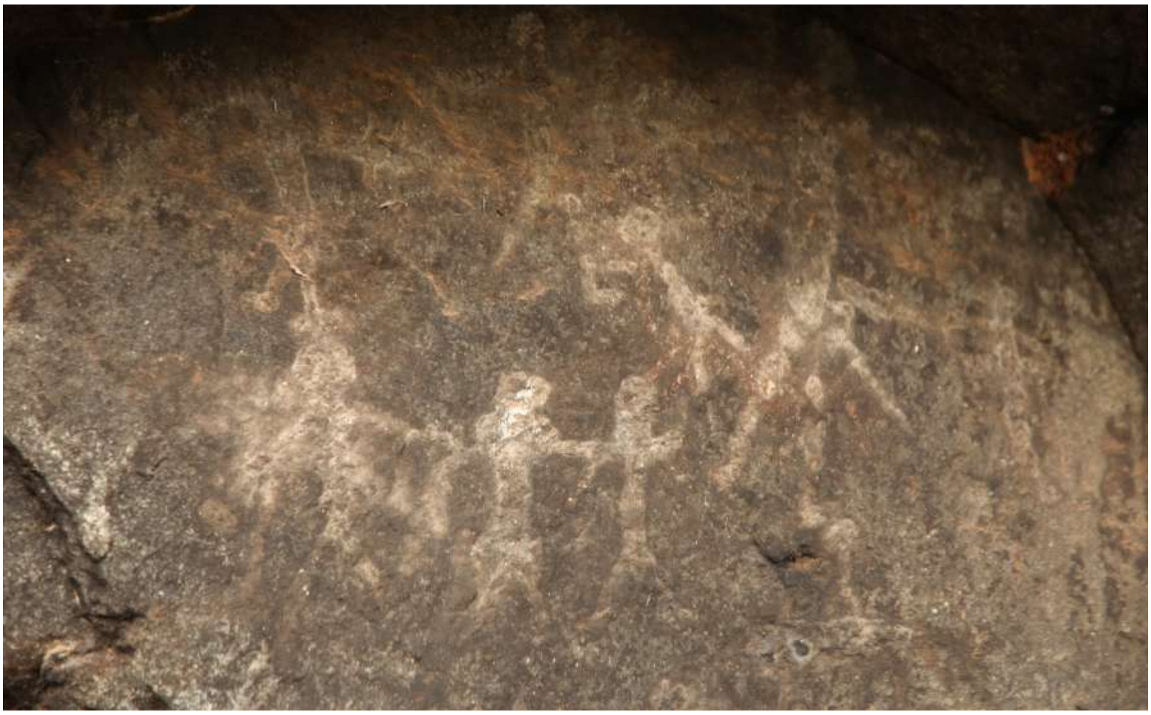


Fig. 4.3.39a Dancing scene

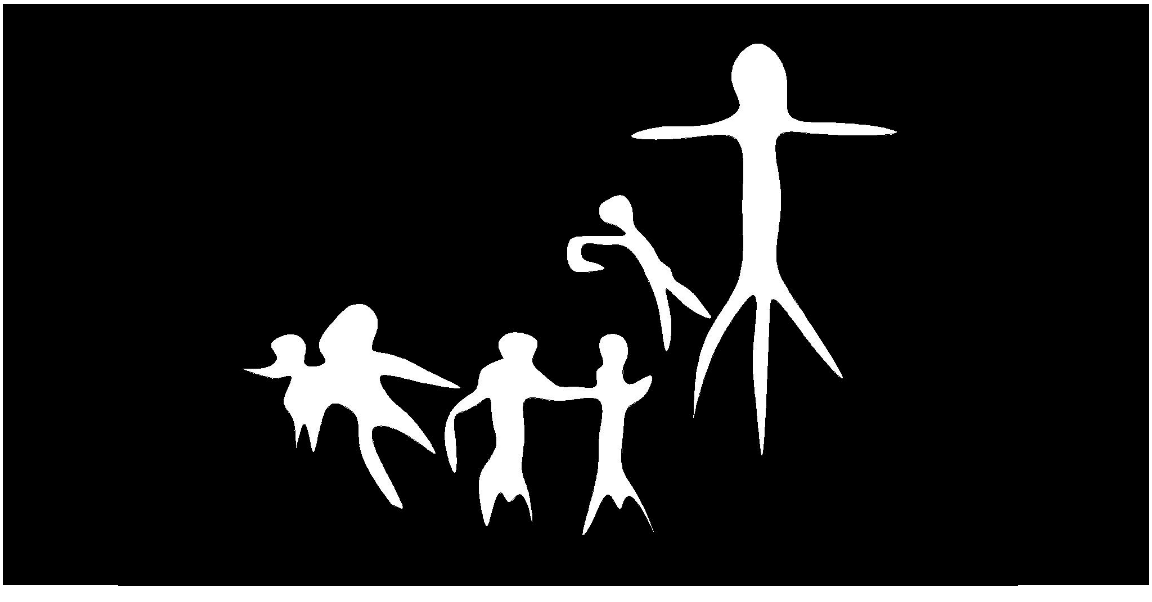


Fig. 4.3.39b Dancing scene

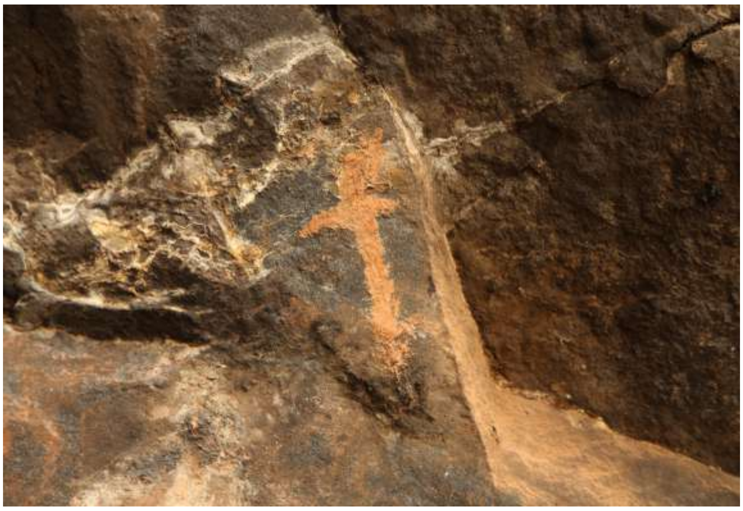


Fig. 4.3.40a Human

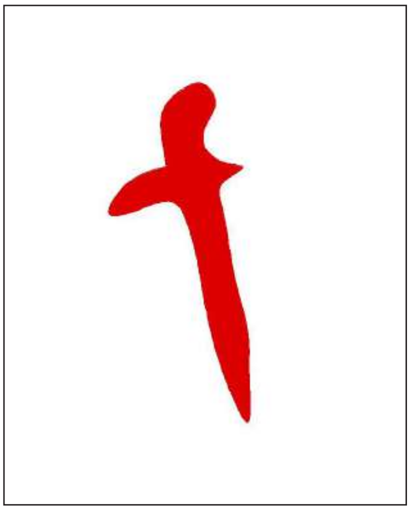


Fig. 4.3.40b Human

This painting has a human-like figure (Figs. 4.3.40a-4.3.40b). The painting is drawn using simple lines in orange colour.

This painting shows that two human figures are riding horses (Figs. 4.3.41a-4.3.41b). These paintings are painted in white with very simple lines.

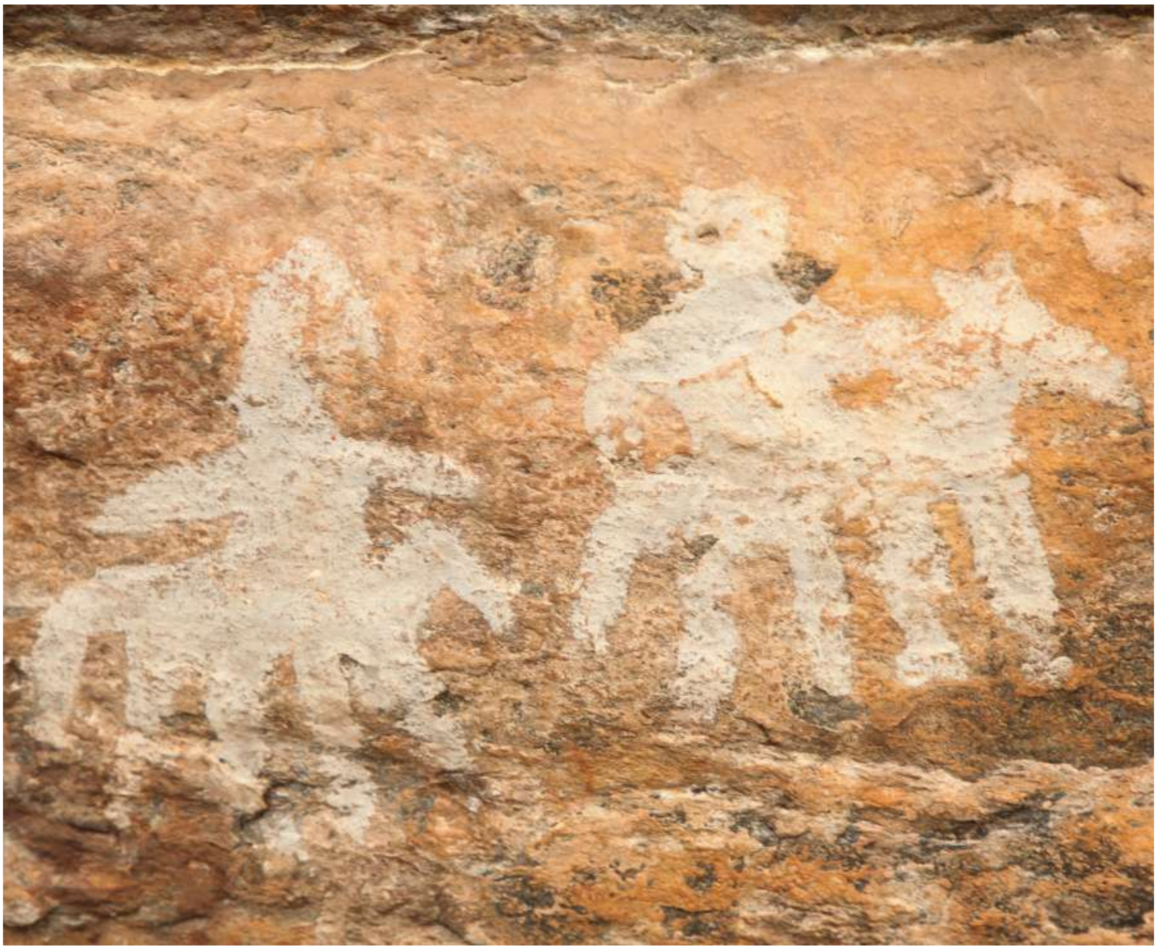


Fig. 4.3.41a Two riders

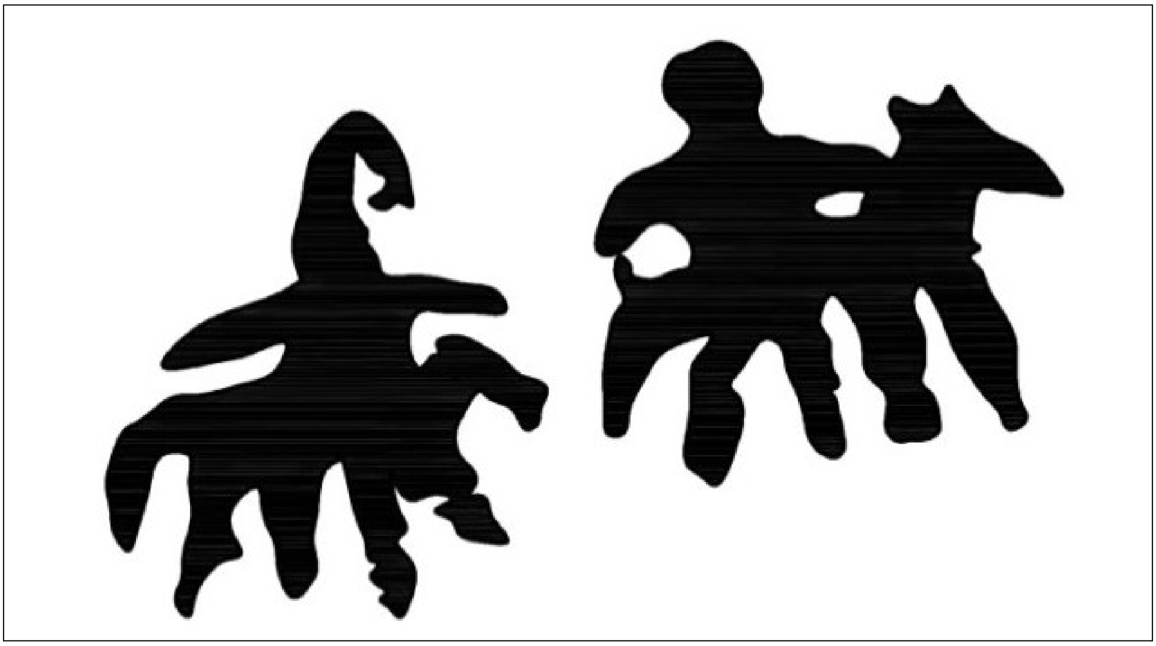


Fig. 4.3.41b Two riders

The two human figures appear to be facing each other and holding some weapons, which looks like a fight scene (Figs. 4.3.42a-4.3.42b). The painting is painted white and it is damaged in some places.

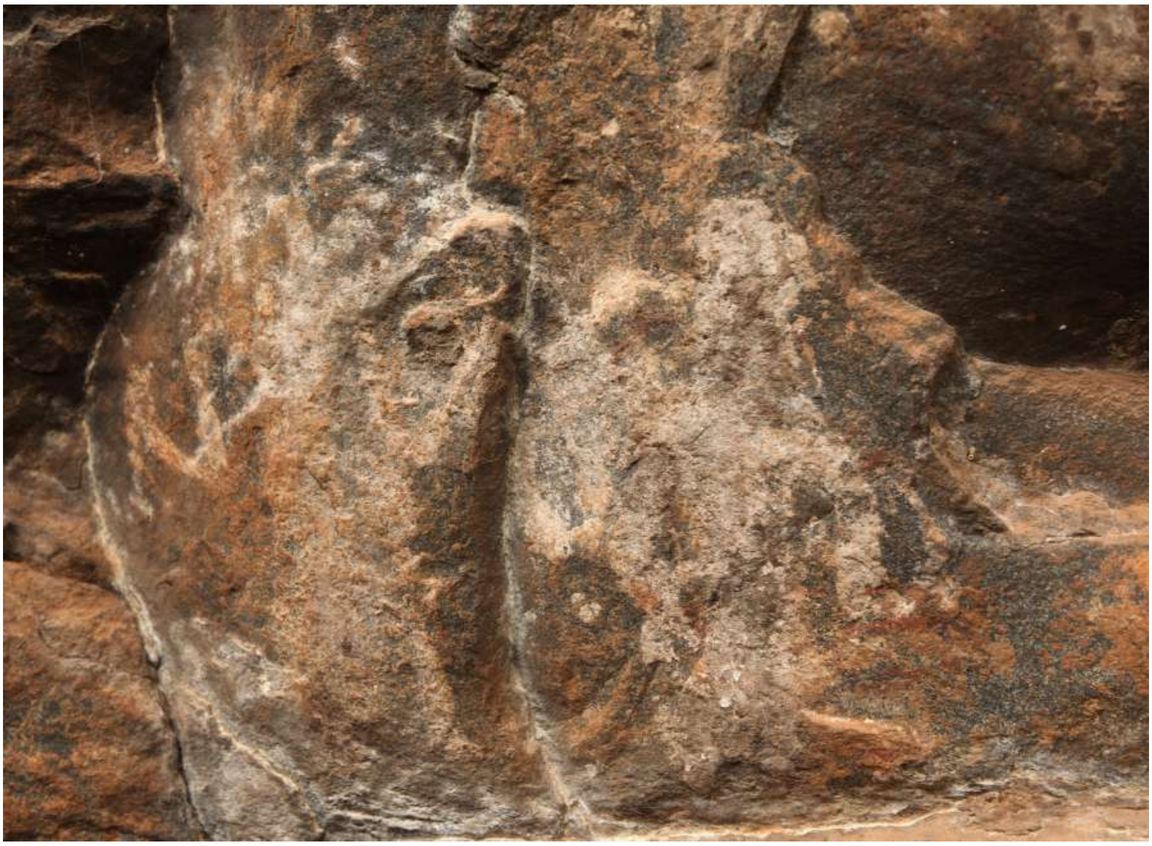


Fig. 4.3.42a Fight scene

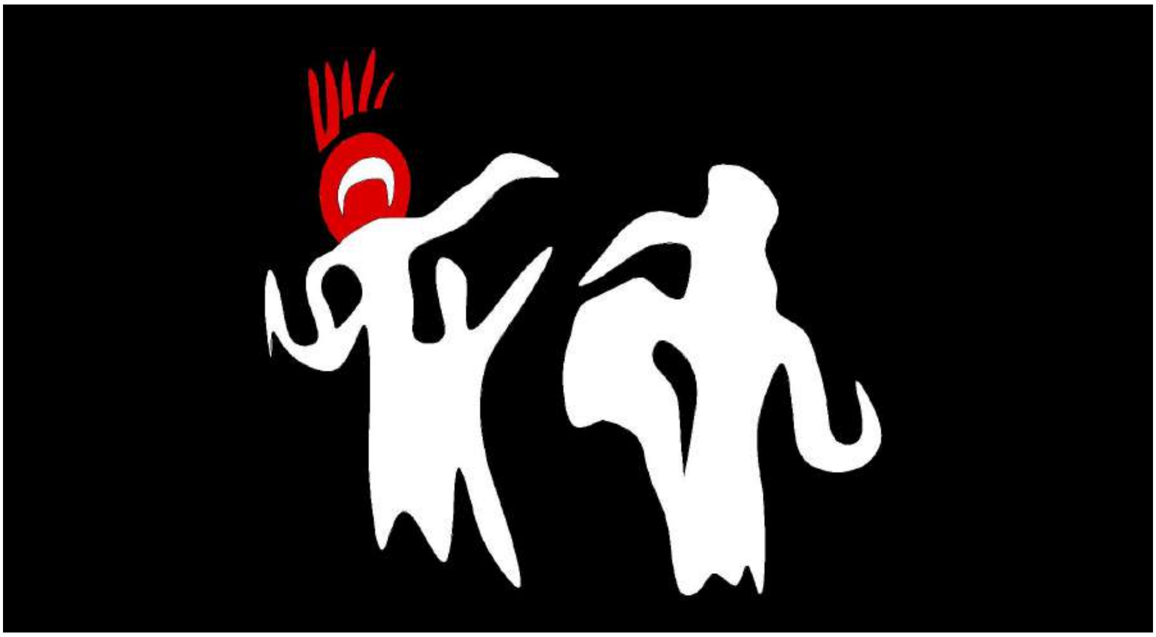


Fig. 4.3.42b Fight scene

This (Figs. 4.3.43a-4.3.43b) painting depicts two elephants, a bird, a cow and a human figure. All these paintings are painted in white. These figures are first outlined and then filled with white colour. The human figure is shown not carrying any hunting tools and is shown in a very simple manner. Likewise, animals and birds are shown in a naturalist way.

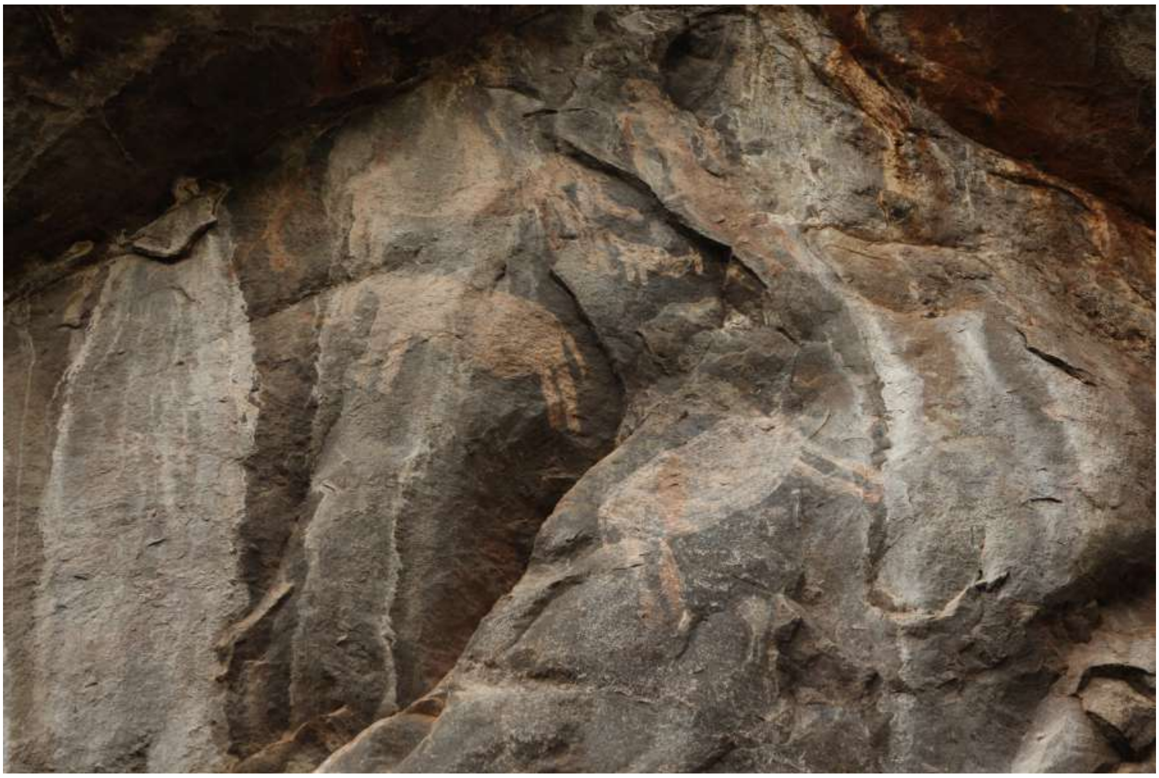


Fig. 4.3.43a Elephant, bird and cow

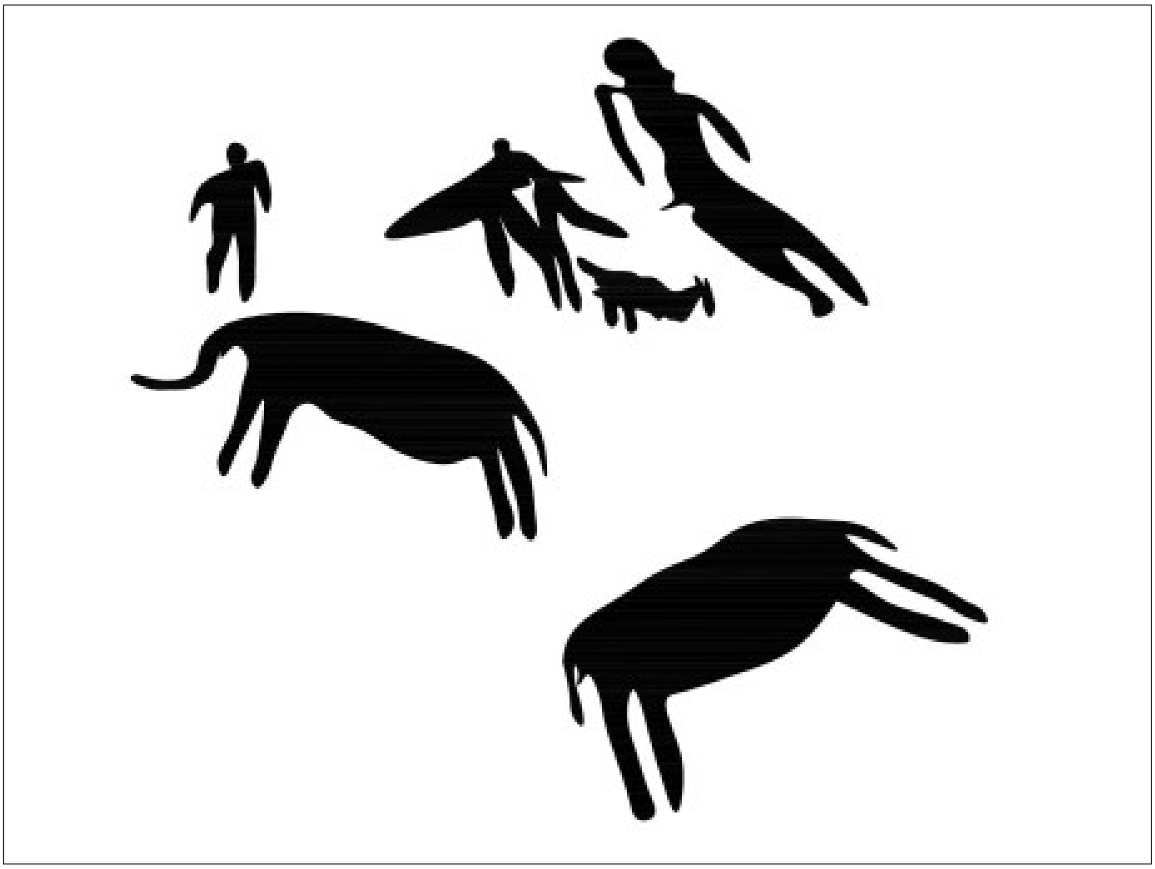


Fig. 4.3.43b Elephant, bird and

Villupuram District

4.4 Alambadi

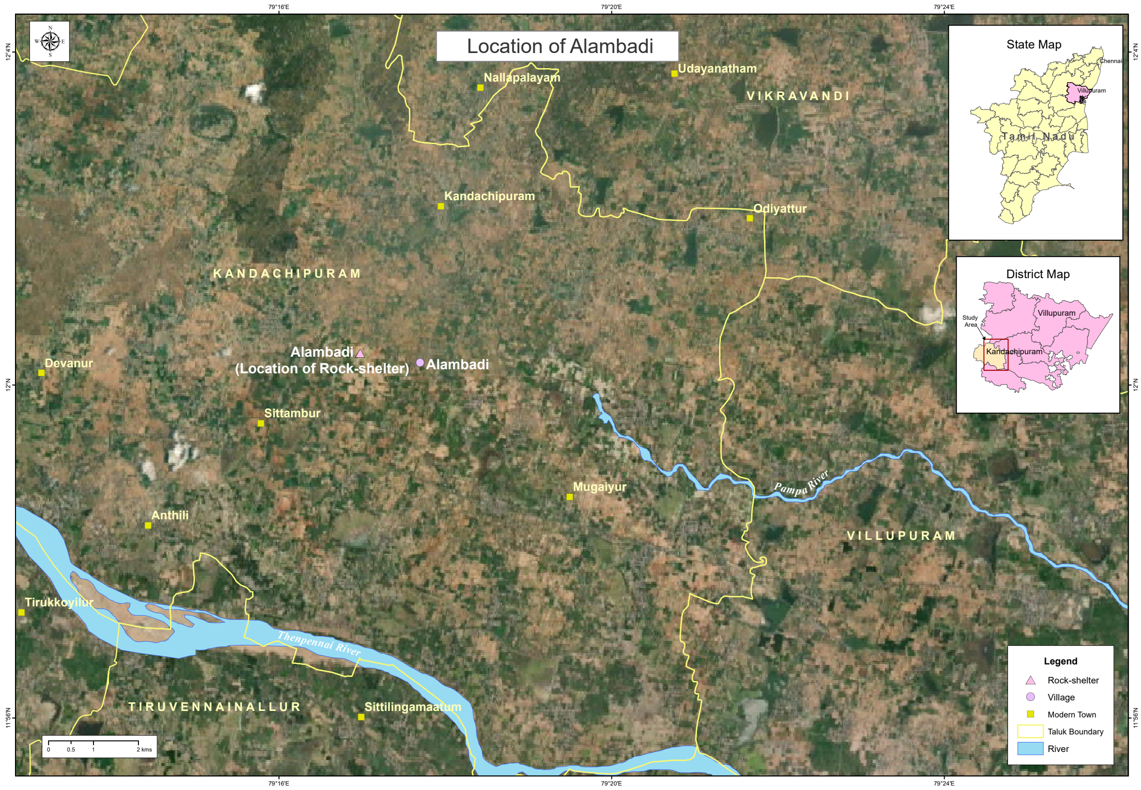
Alambadi village (12.00634 E; 79.28294 N) is located in Tirukovilur taluk of Villupuram district. This village lies 3 km southeast of Kandachipuram and lies 6 km north of Thenpennai river, and west of Alambadi Lake (Map 4.4.1-4.4.2). The prehistoric paintings are found at the base of a cave in the Koozhangal Paarai hills which is located in the middle of the field about 2 km north of this village. It is a well-preserved site compared to others in this district. The reason for which is its location. It is not located closer to villages or roads but surrounded by cultivated fields.

Rock Shelter

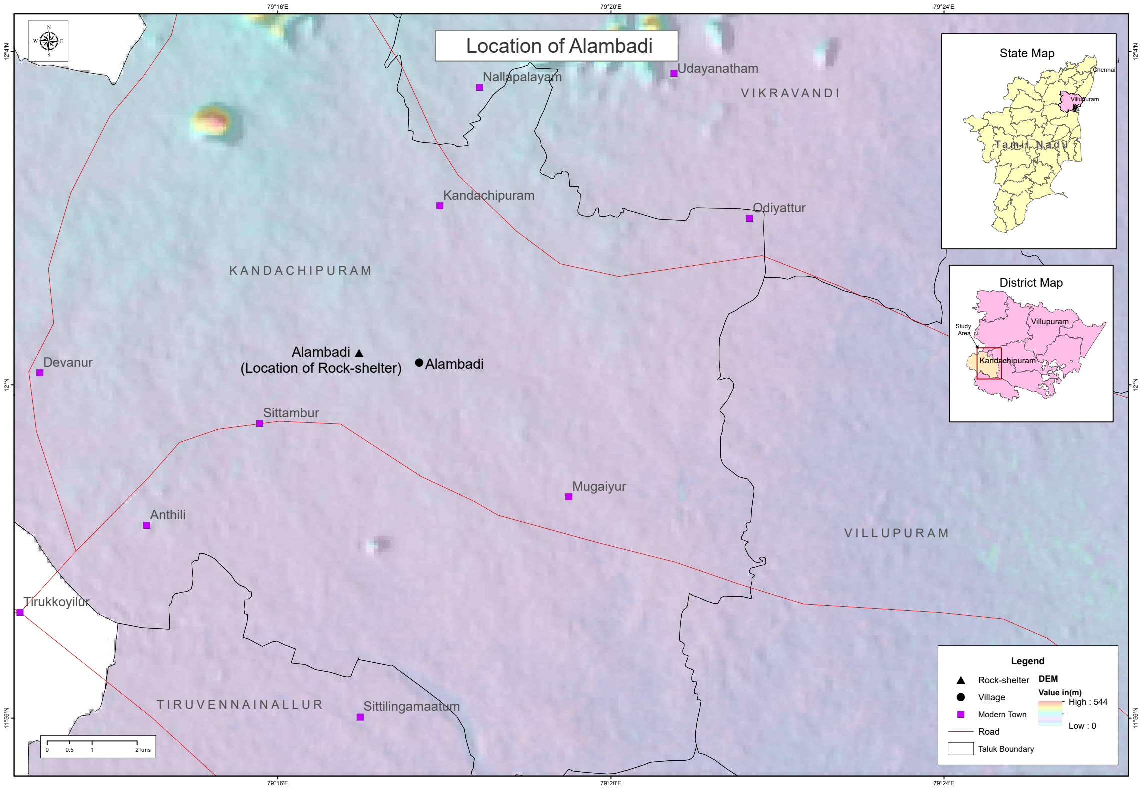
The total length of the painted surface is about 8 m whereas the total length of the rock shelter is about 16 m and the total height is about 9 m. The total painting surface is about 48 sq.m. (Figs. 4.4.1-4.4.3).

Description

Paintings are in red and white colours. Imageries include a cow, a deer, a calf and a bear including an incomplete figure of a masked human. Cow imagery dominates the panel and is X-ray type showing the inner anatomy of the animal. Cattle, deer, iguana,


Location of Alambadi
State Map
District Map
Nallapalayam
Udayanatham
VIKRAVANDI
Kandachipuram
Odiyattur
KANDACHIPURAM
Alambadi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Alambadi
Devanur
Sittambur
Mugaiyur
Pampa River
Anthili
VILLUPURAM
Tirukkoyilur
Thenpennai River
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Sittilingamaatum
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.4.1 Location of Alambadi


Location of Alambadi
State Map
District Map
Nallapalayam
Udayanatham
VIKRAVANDI
Kandachipuram
Odiyattur
KANDACHIPURAM
Alambadi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Alambadi
Devanur
Sittambur
Mugaiyur
Anthili
VILLUPURAM
Tirukkoyilur
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Sittilingamaatum
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 544
Low : 0

Map 4.4.2 Location of Alambadi

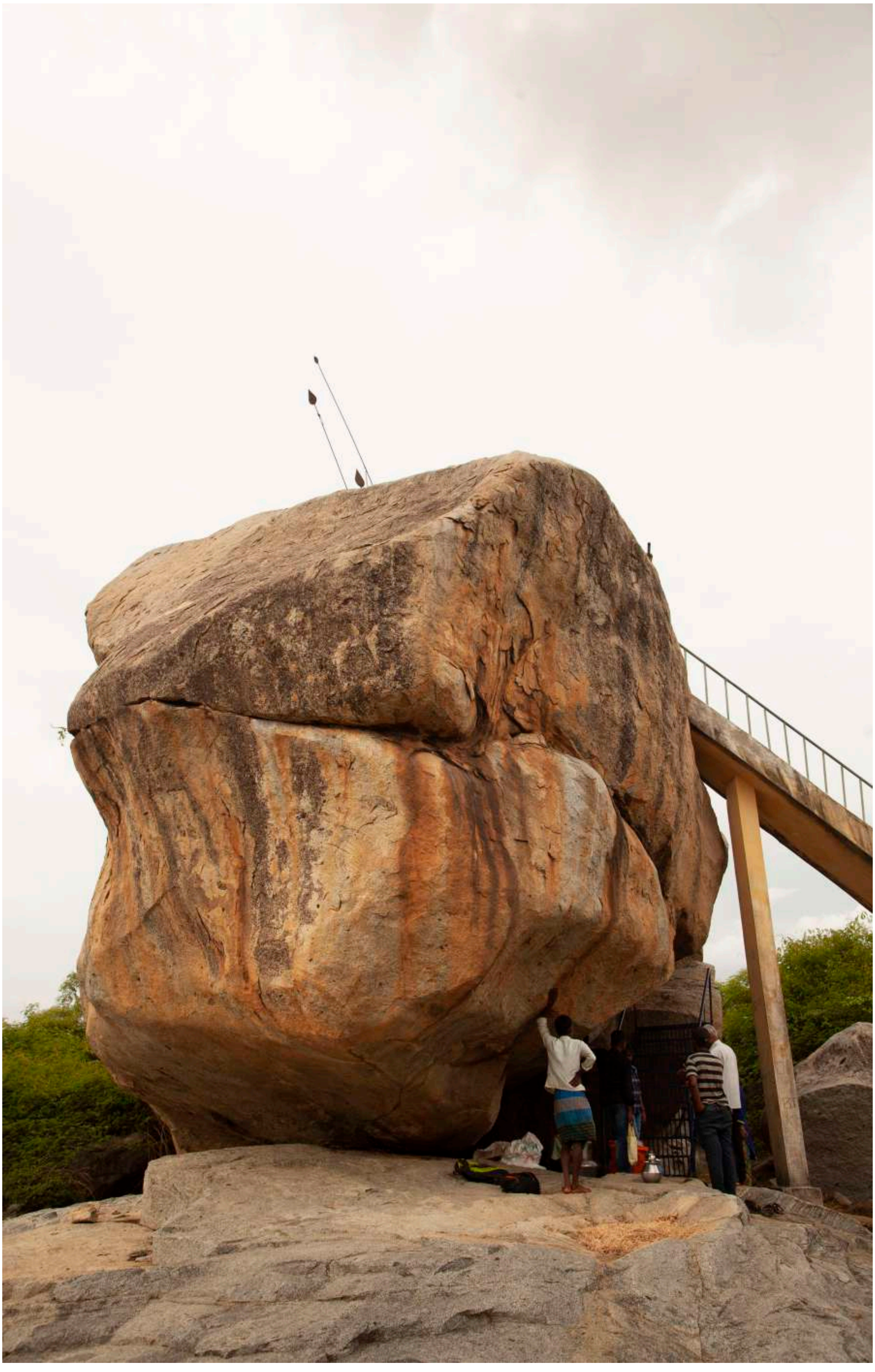


Fig. 4.4.1 General view of the rock-shelter

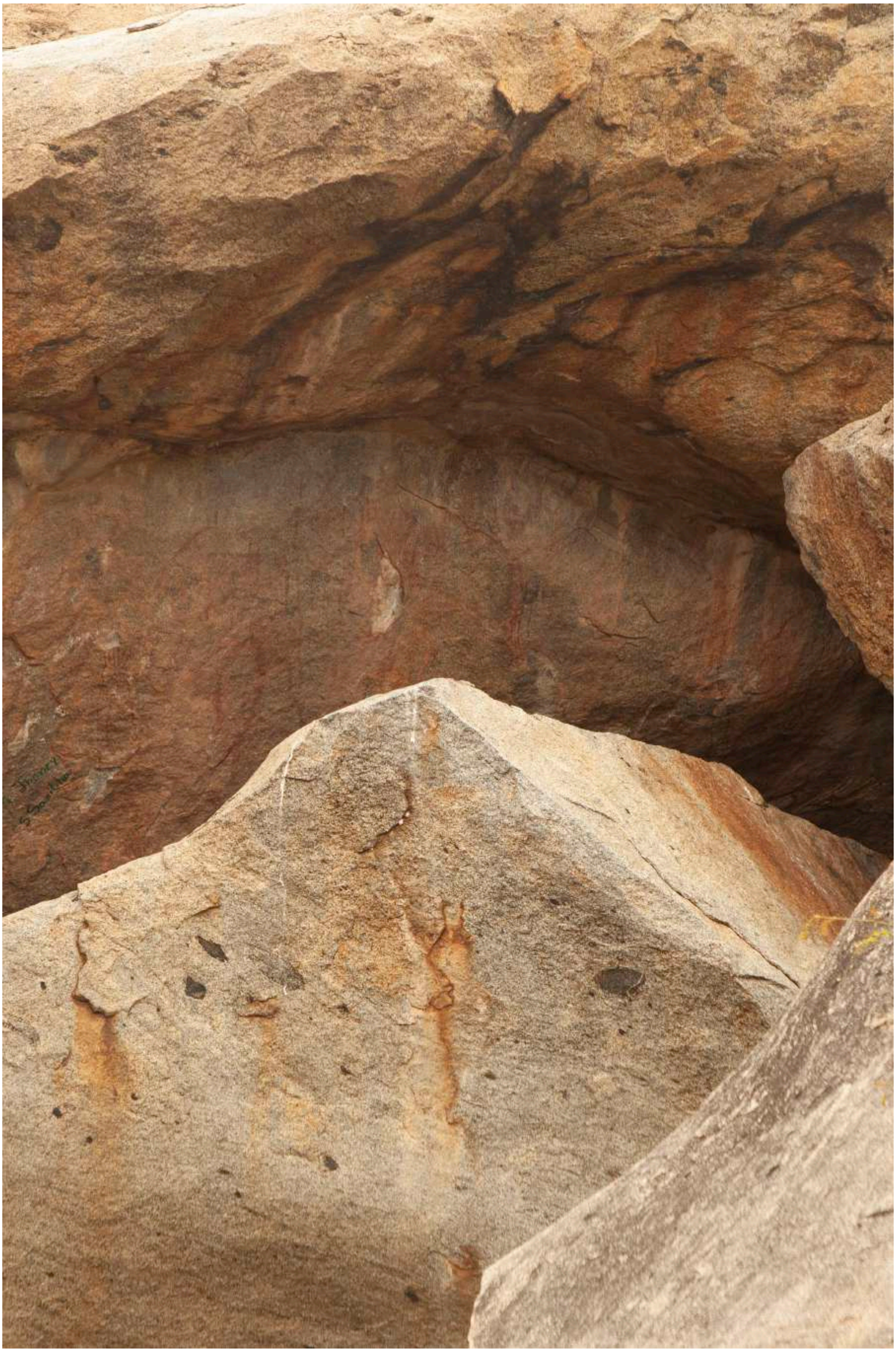


Fig. 4.4.2 General view of the rock-shelter

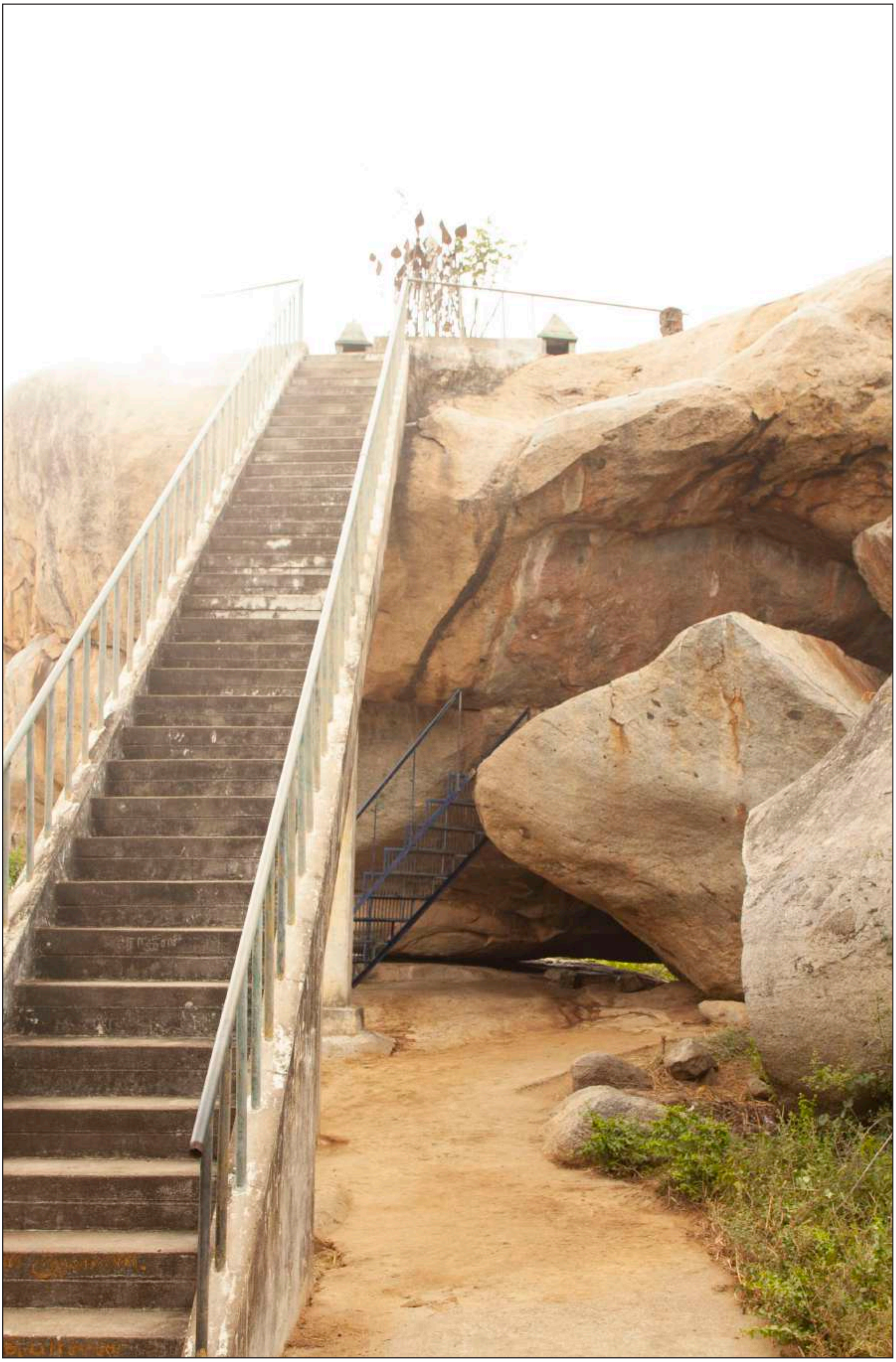


Fig. 4.4.3 General view of the rock-shelter

tiger and unidentified figures are painted in red colour. The paintings are drawn in a linear pattern as well as filled with colour.

Panel Description

The figure of single deer is drawn in red (Fig. 4.4.4a). It is drawn with a linear line at the outer surface and the inner body portion is filled with red. Deer has visible face with ears and small sized tail. Next to the deer is another animal figure, which also could be a deer.

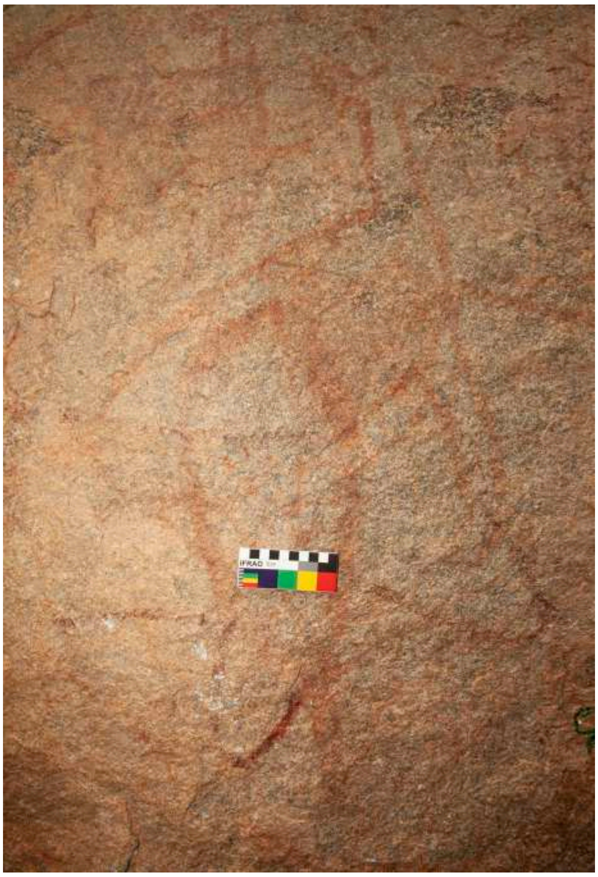


Fig 4.4.4a Deer and animal figurine

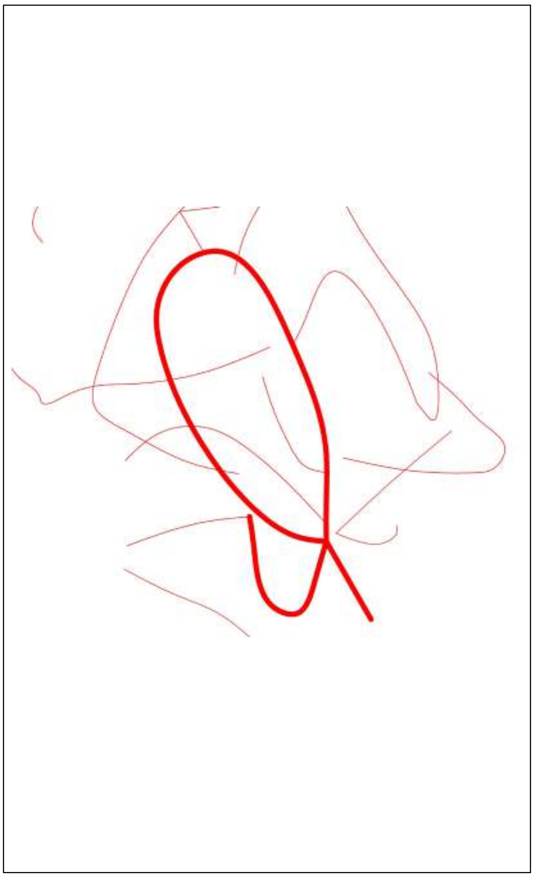


Fig 4.4.4b Deer and animal figurine

This panel comprises multiple scenes in red pigment which depict the flora and fauna such as tree, fish, geometric and non-geometric symbols (Fig. 4.4.5a). Tree was drawn with branches at the left side of the panel. Tree is drawn with two fishes without any filling in a water body. The water body is shown with wavy lines. Next to these paintings, five stone boulders connected with two other boulders are drawn on their right. Two leaf motifs were depicted as a branch of tree. All these are painted with red ochre. This entire scene represents environmental settings. Lizard, hand impression and a few more animals are painted next to this panel.

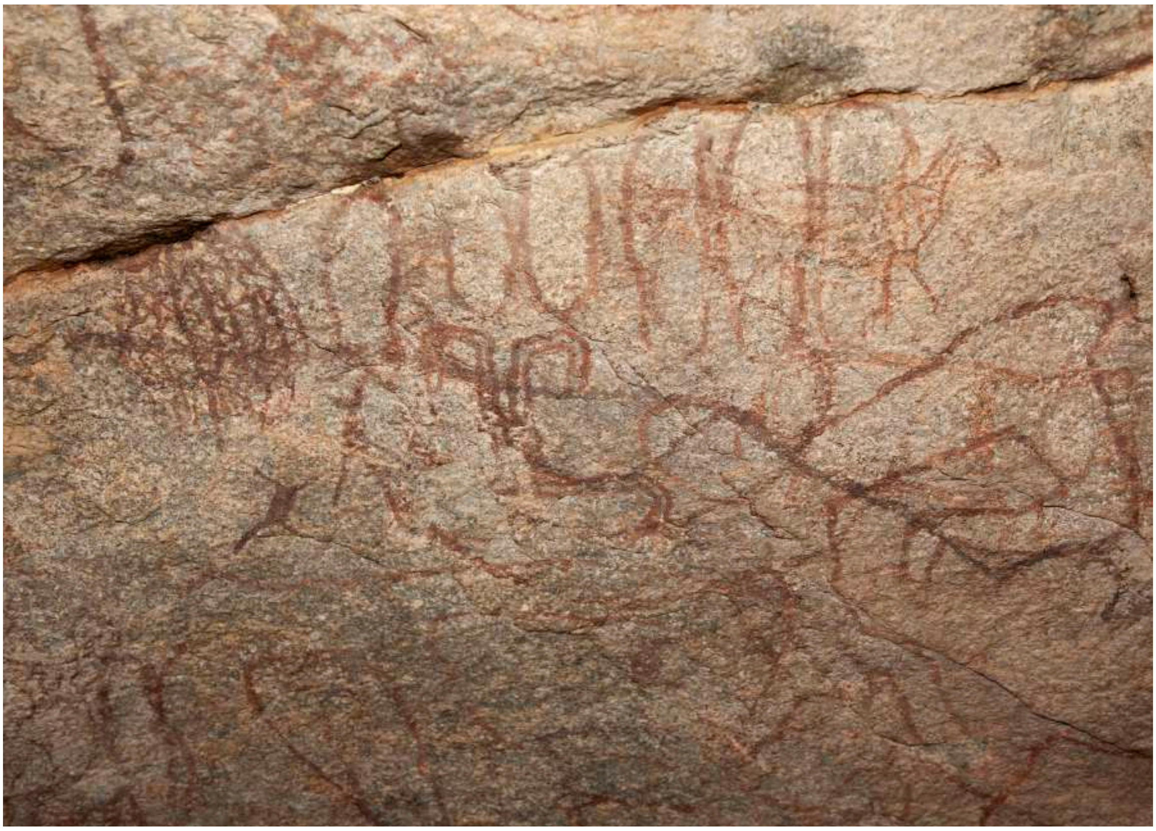


Fig. 4.4.5a Tree, fishes, geometric and non- geometric signs

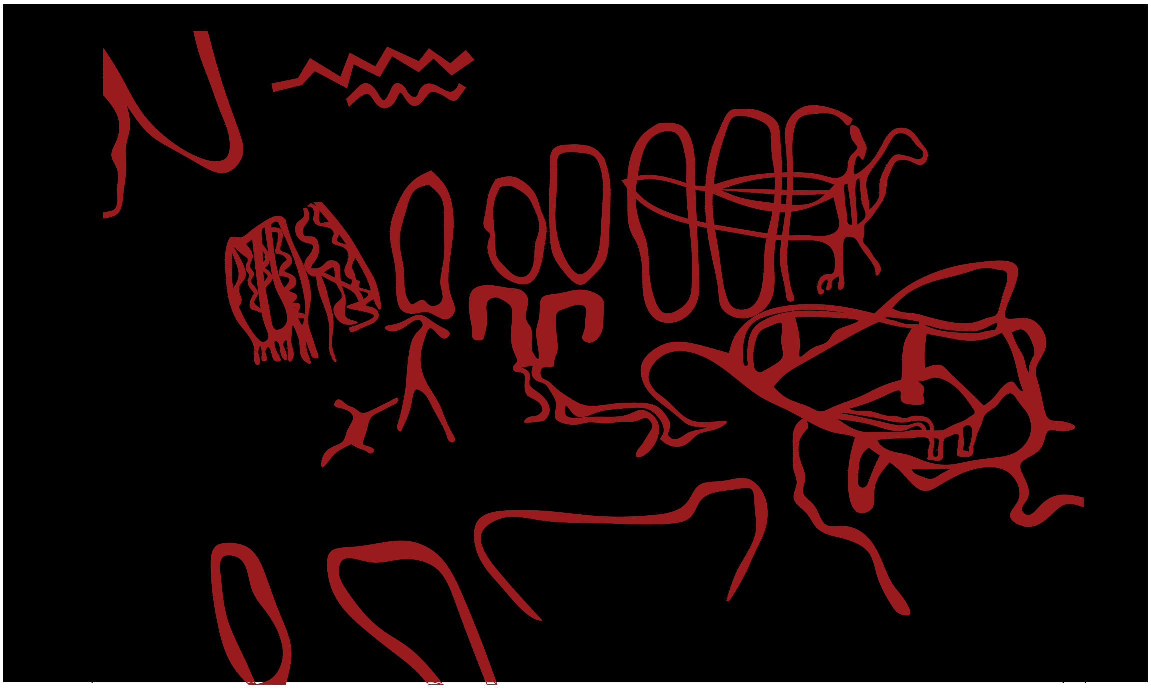
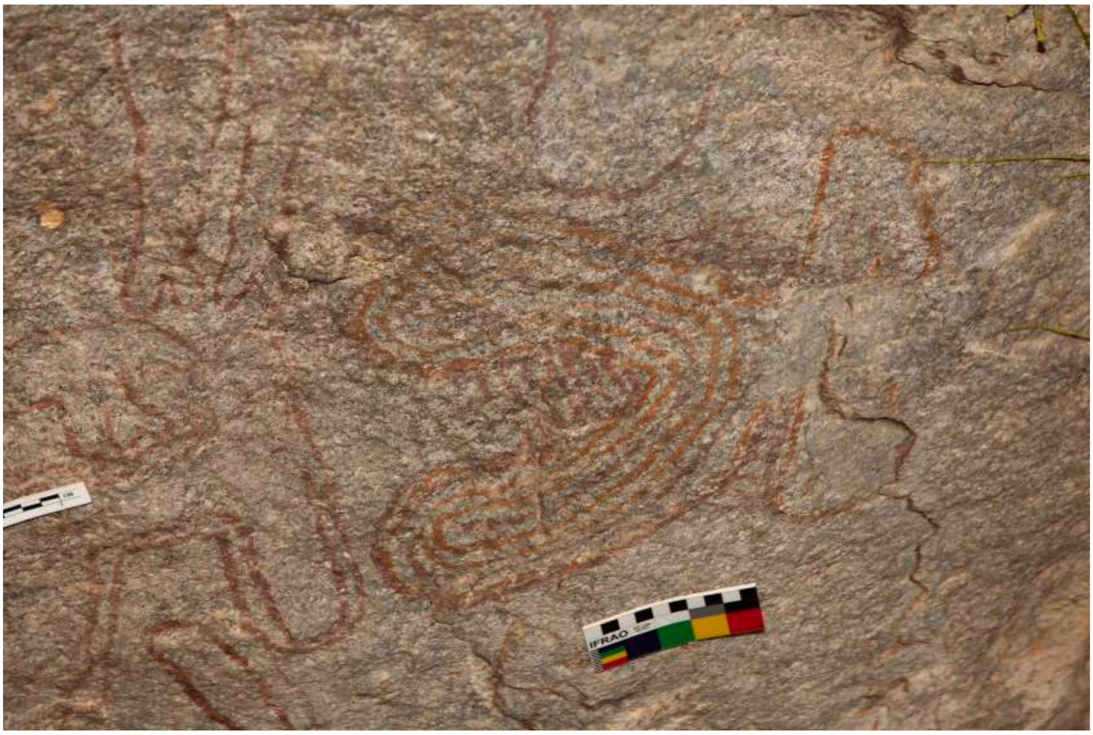
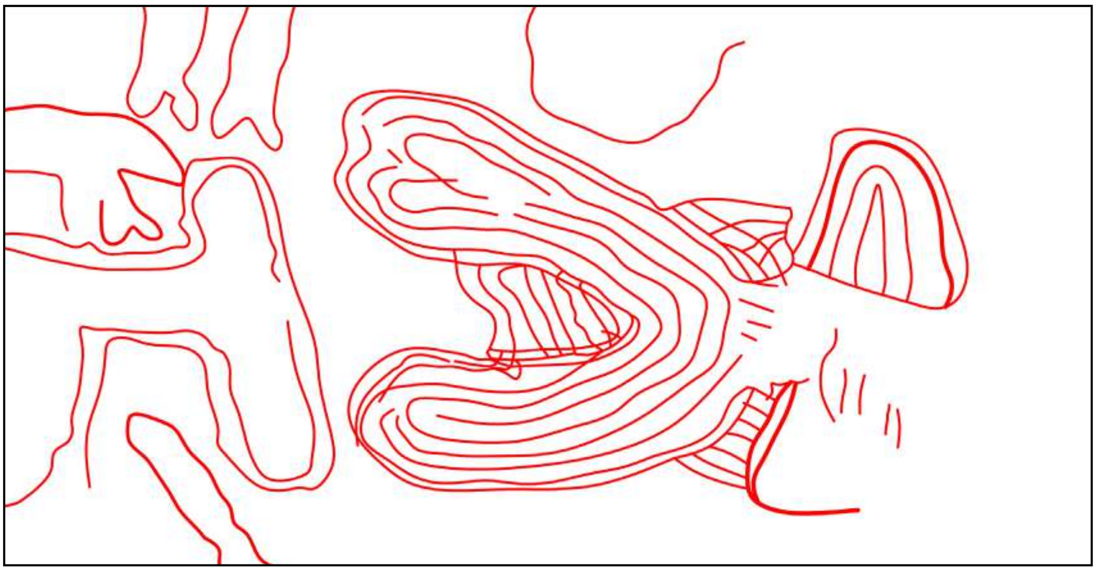


Fig. 4.4.5b Tree, fishes, geometric and non-geometric signs

This panel comprises a water body and the everyday activities of animals. Many animal varieties (like deer), lizard varieties with different sizes were depicted on the land surface (Fig. 4.4.6a). One animal (deer) is depicted in a position of drinking water, it has four legs and a small tail. The neck is bent towards the water body. This deer image is large in size. The upper portion of the painting is badly preserved. Few imageries depicted at the right side are filled with lines. Lizards of different varieties are depicted with four legs along with another animal with four legs. Tree and leaf motifs are also painted. purpose few geometric designs are also seen.



▸ *Fig. 4.4.6a. Scene of a water body and animal*



▸ *Fig. 4.4.6b. Scene of a water body and animal*

This panel depicts many animals (Fig. 4.4.7a). Iguana is depicted with hands and legs and a small tail, but painted in a large size. Lizards, deer, other animals, water bodies, geometric symbols and zig-zag lines are also seen.

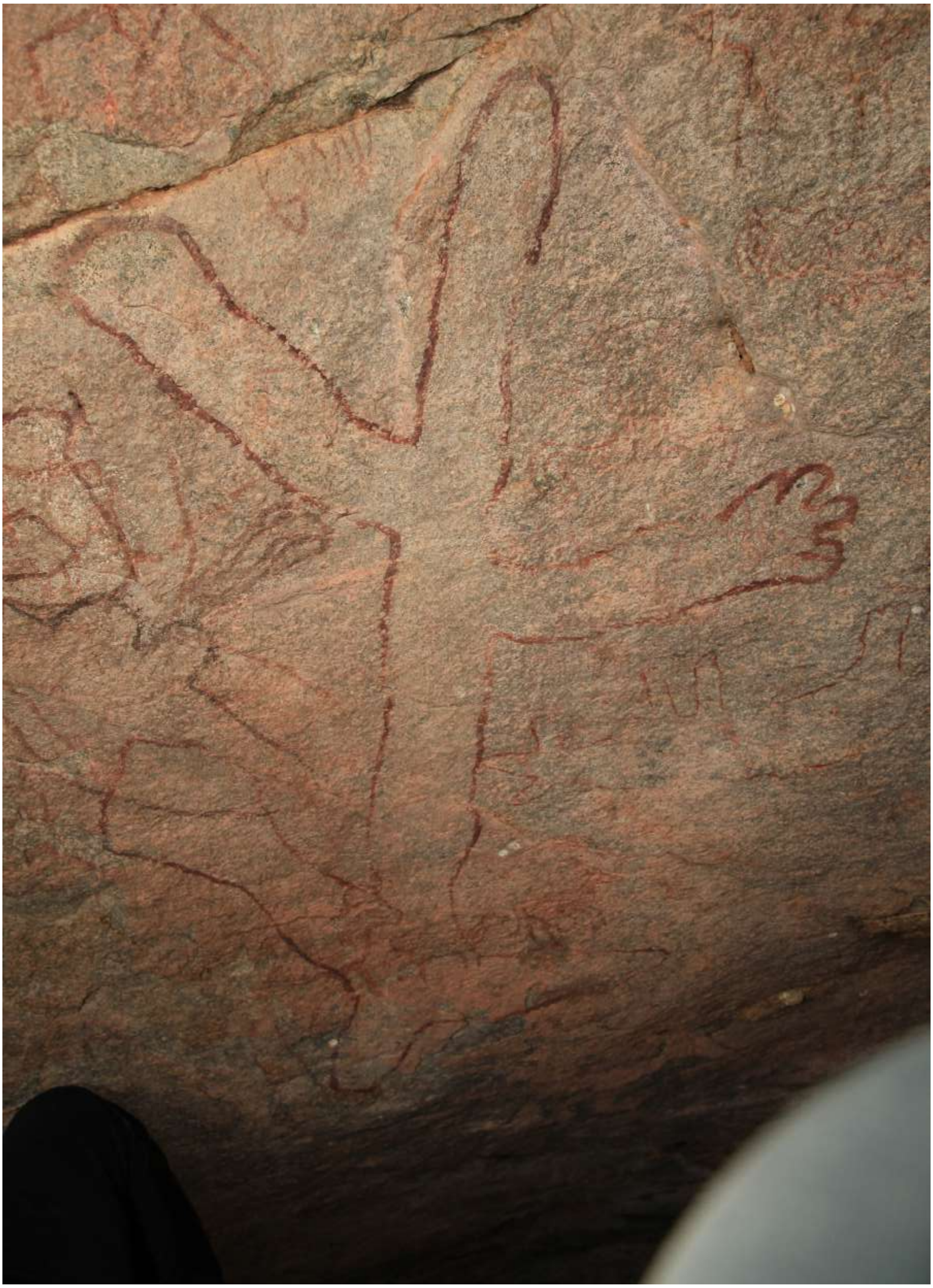


Fig. 4.4.7a Scene of environmental settings

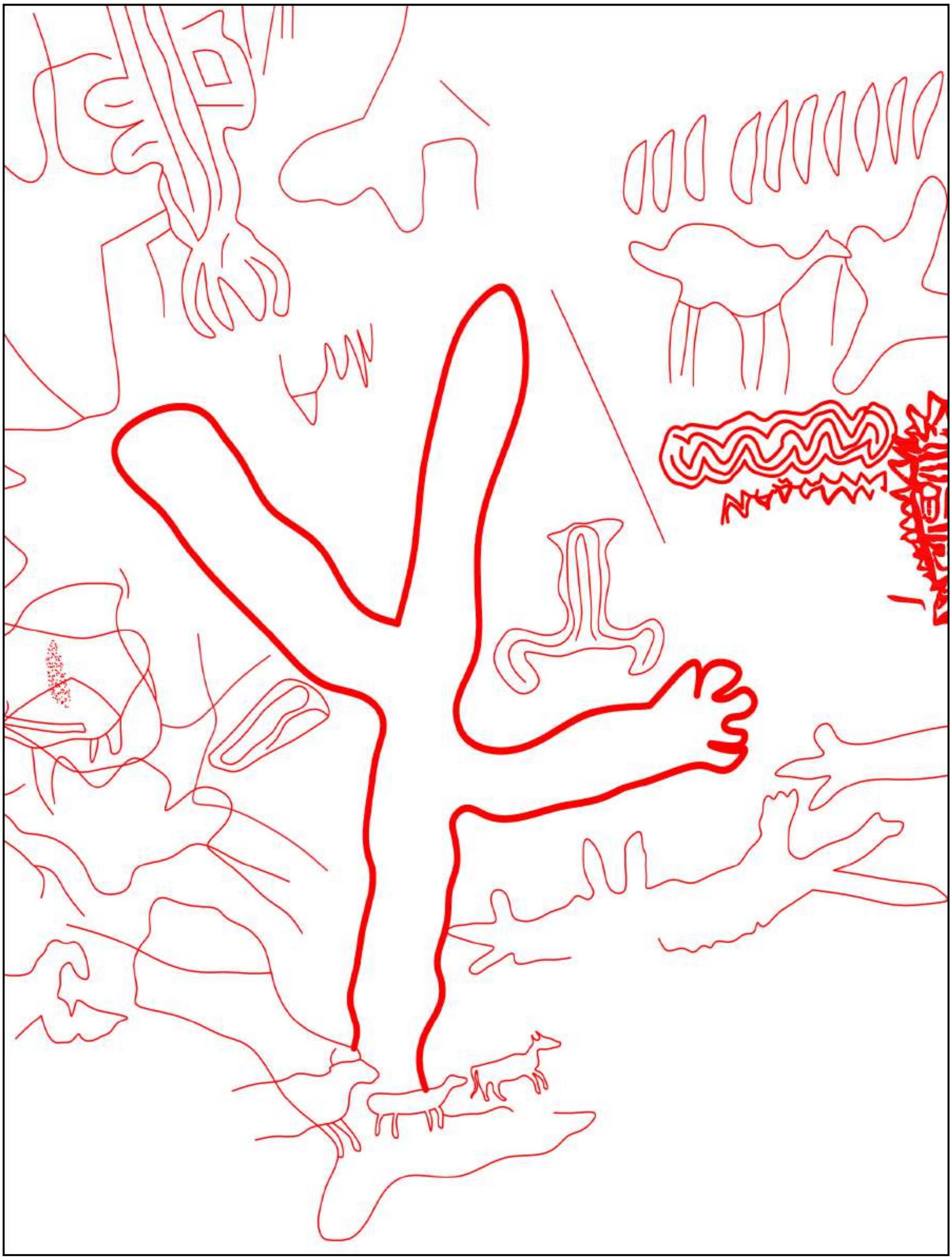


Fig. 4.4.7b Scene of environmental settings

These paintings are drawn with a lizard, an iguana and some unidentified animals are also painted (Fig. 4.4.8a). Geometric and non-geometric signs are also depicted. All with the images are drawn in red with thick outer lines.

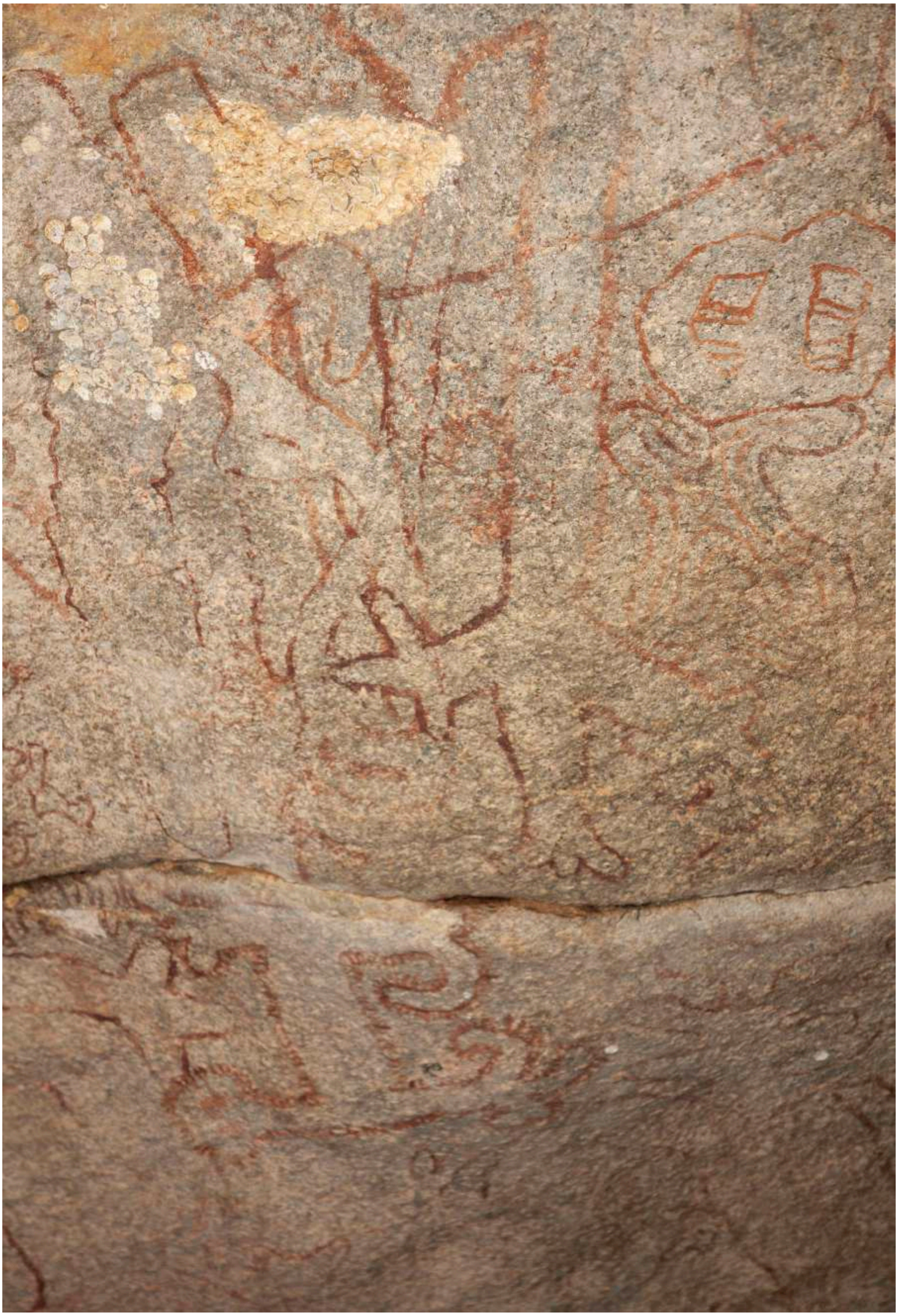


Fig. 4.4.8a Scene of Lizards, Iguana and unidentified animals

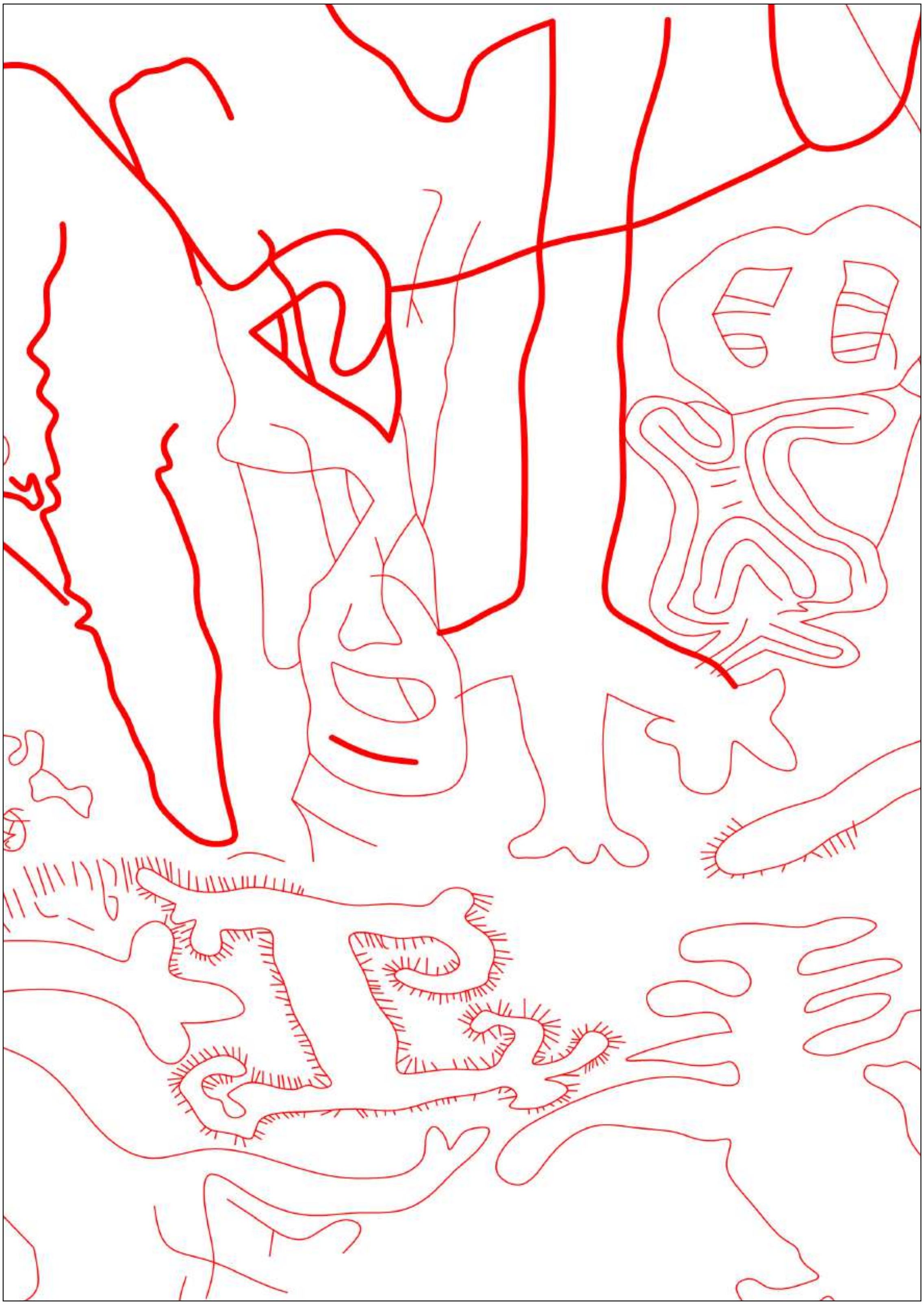


Fig. 4.4.8b Scene of Lizards, Iguana and unidentified animals

This panel depicts multiple varieties of animals, geometric and non-geometric signs in red colour (Fig. 4.4.9a). Decorations like lines, cross lines, circles and zig zag patterned lines are also seen.

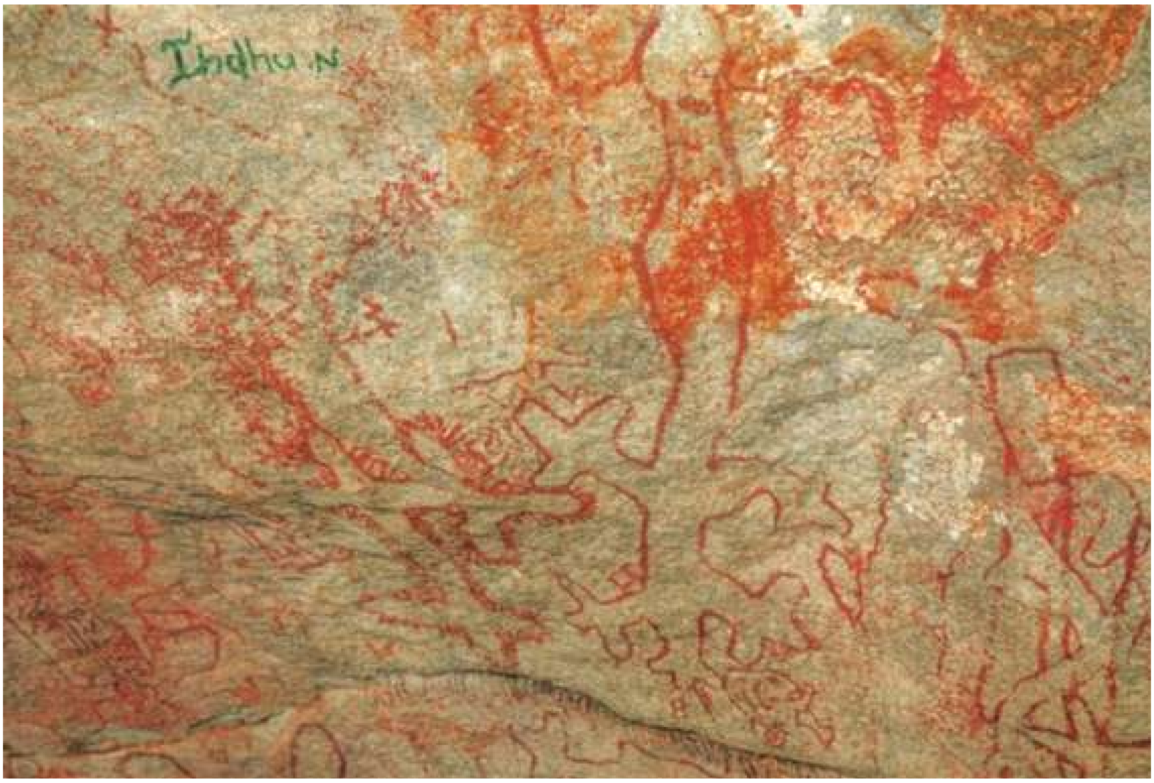


Fig 4.4.9a Scene of animals

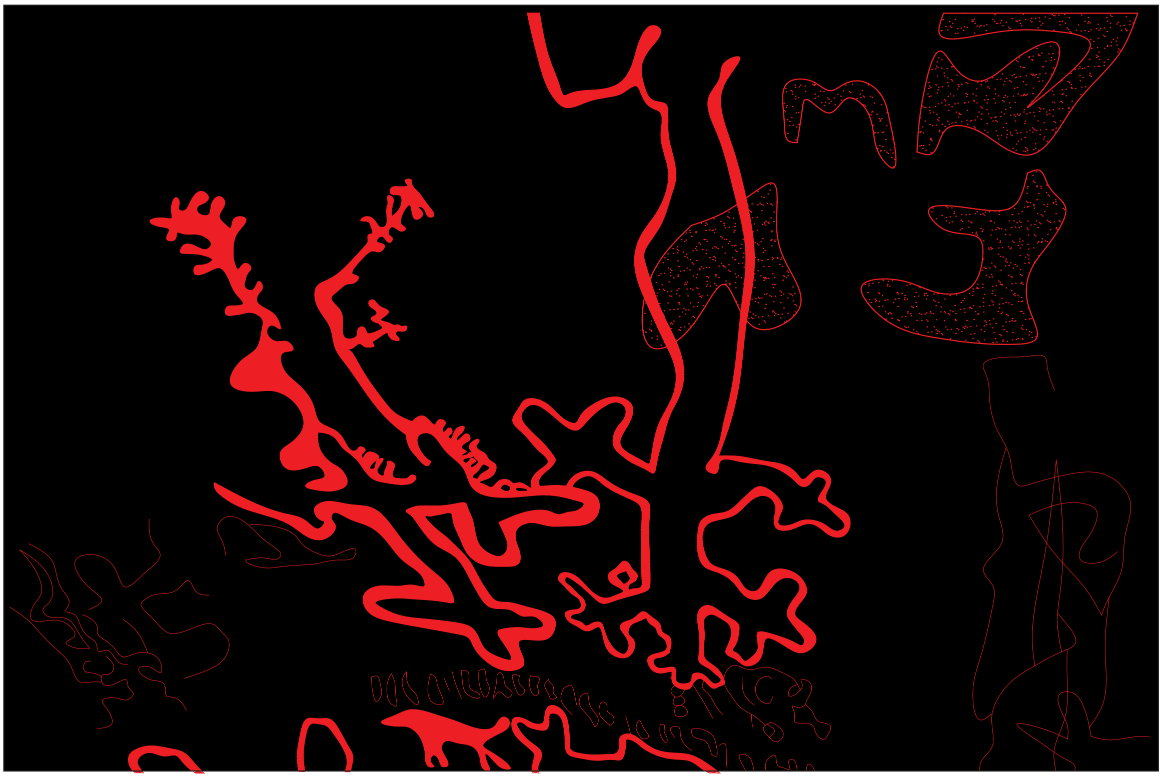


Fig. 4.4.9b Scene of animal

There are drawings that display the inner organs of the body of an animal (Fig. 4.4.10a). It is a kind of x-ray painting style. The most delicate lines are curved and interictally painted in red colour.

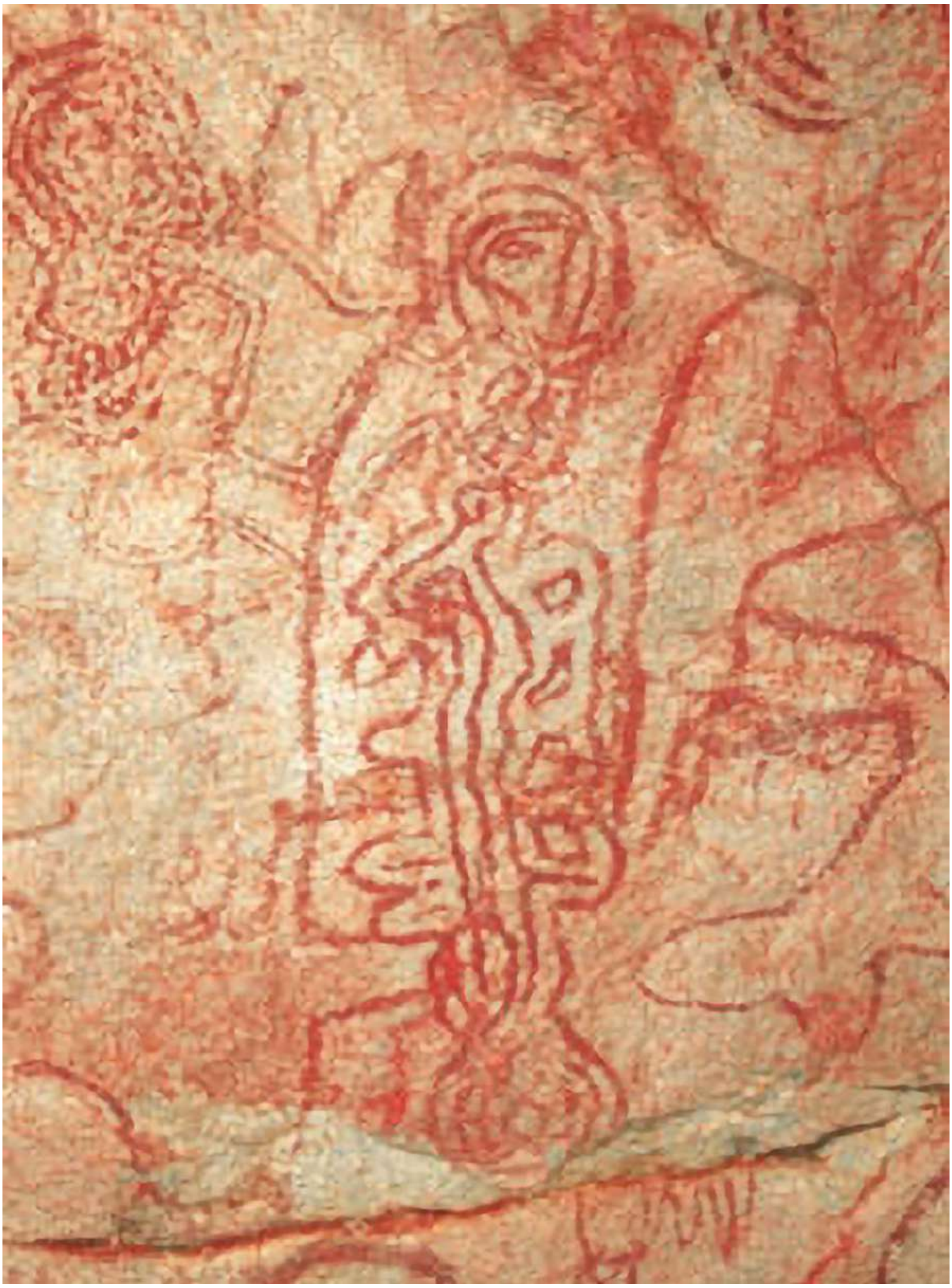


Fig. 4.4.10a Scene of X-ray painting of an animal

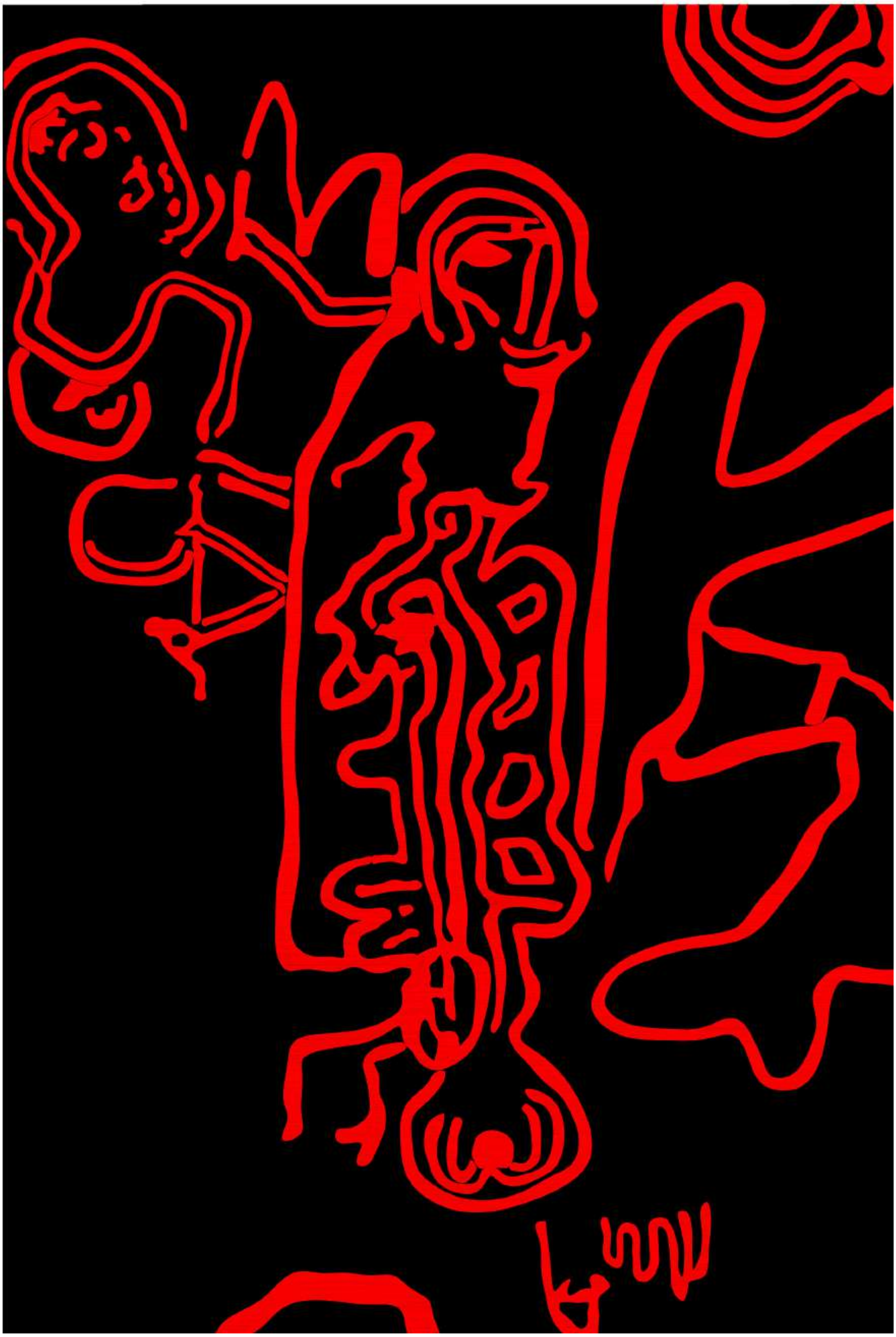


Fig. 4.4.10b Scene of X-ray painting of an animal

Animal figures and geometric lines, square and circle are depicted in this panel (Fig. 4.4.11a). In which straight lines and curved lines are structured together. It is difficult to know the main theme of this scene, as many figurines are unidentifiable.

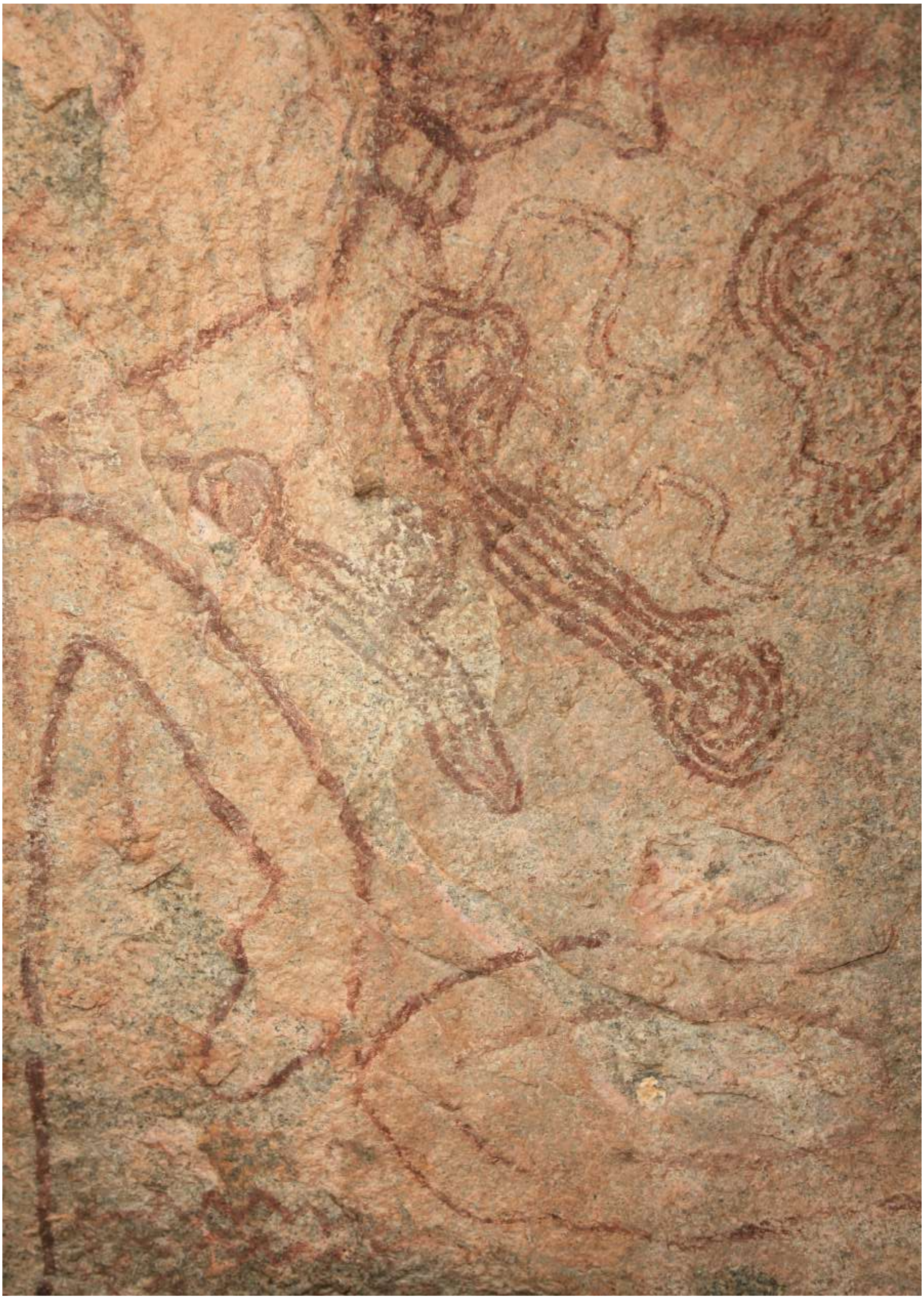


Fig. 4.4.11a Scene of unidentified signs

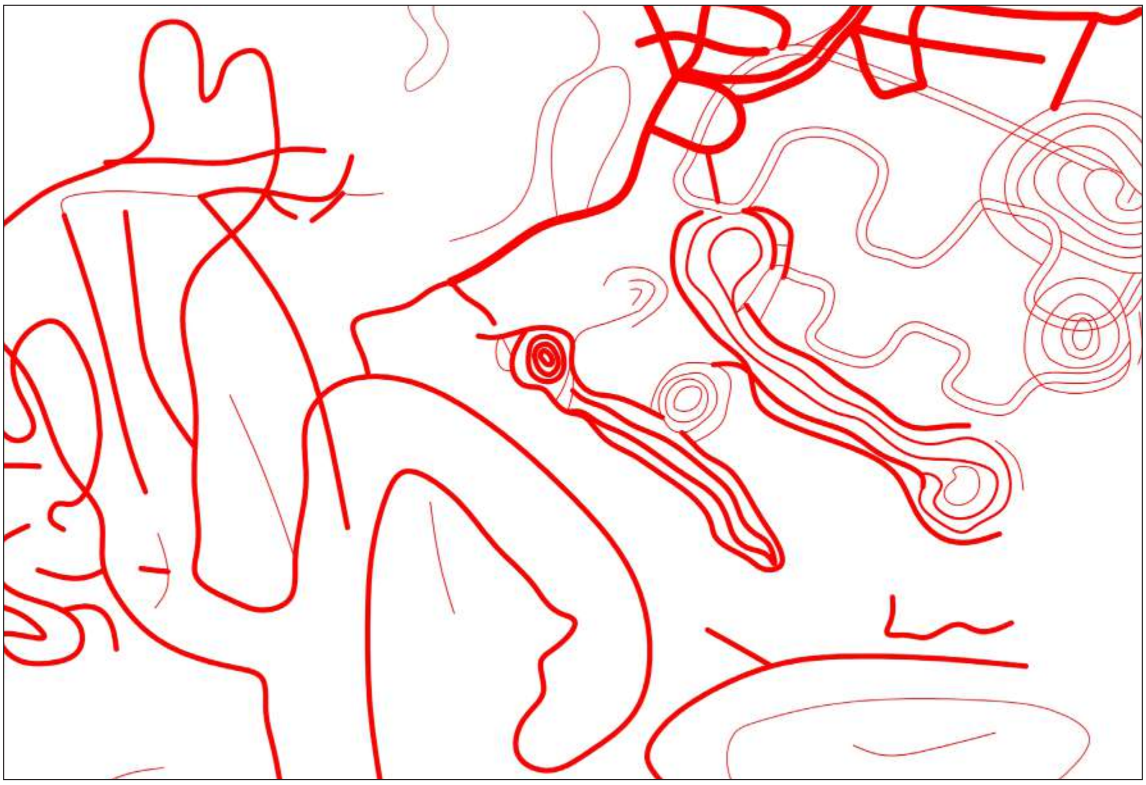


Fig. 4.4.11b Scene of unidentified signs

A figure of a deer like animal is drawn clearly, even the hair also painted at the neck and back side (Fig. 4.4.12a). The body part of the deer is filled with lines. This painting is drawn with red ochre.

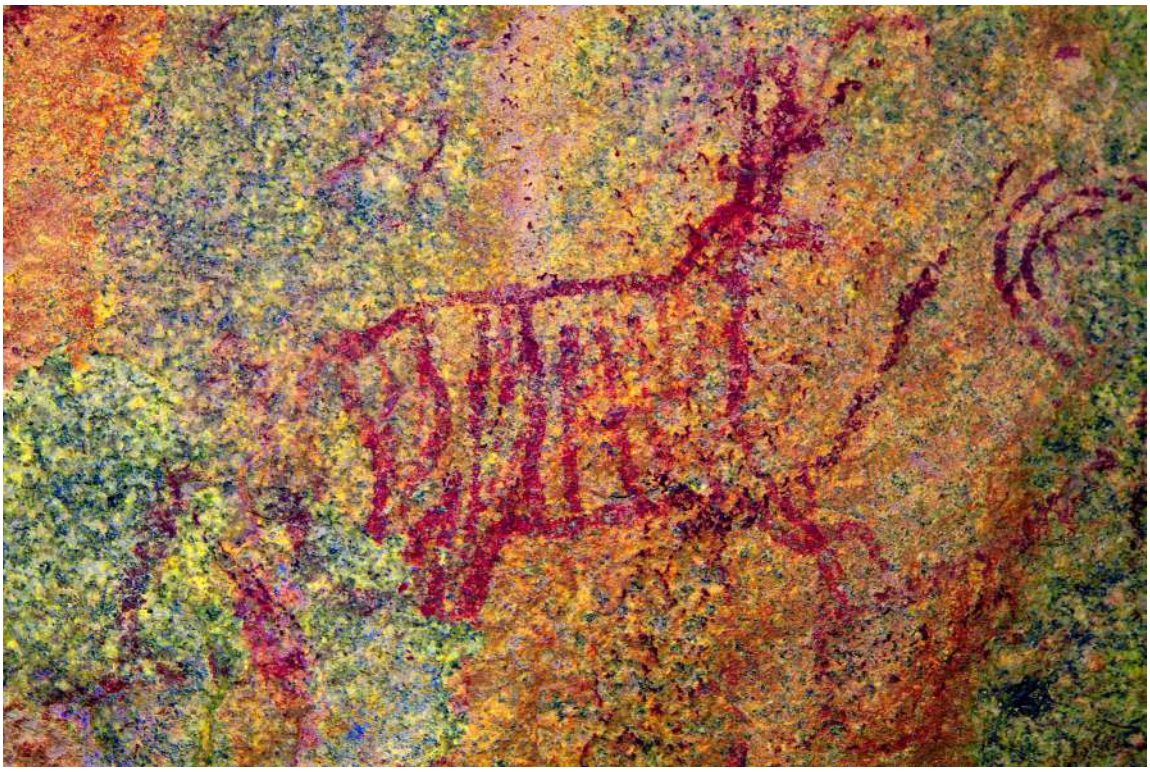


Fig. 4.4.12a Scene of a deer

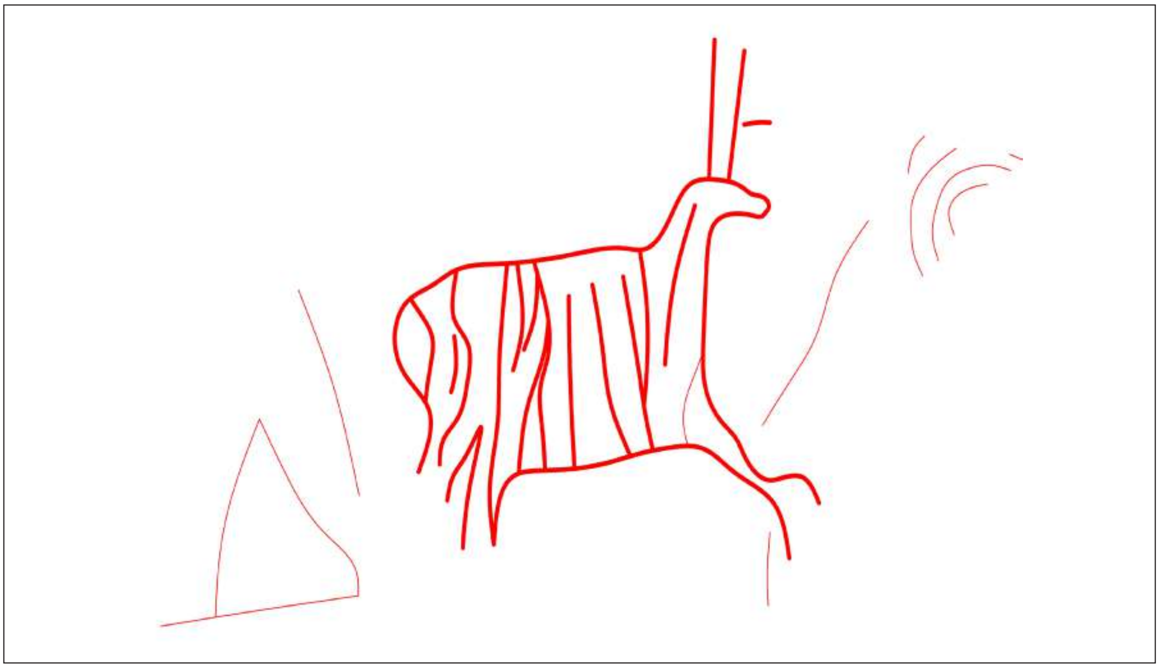


Fig. 4.4.12b Scene of a deer

This panel is represented by many varieties and a mixture of paintings like lines, animals and decorations (Fig. 4.4.13a). Three deer-like animal figures are found in the linear pattern. In some places colour of paintings has faded.

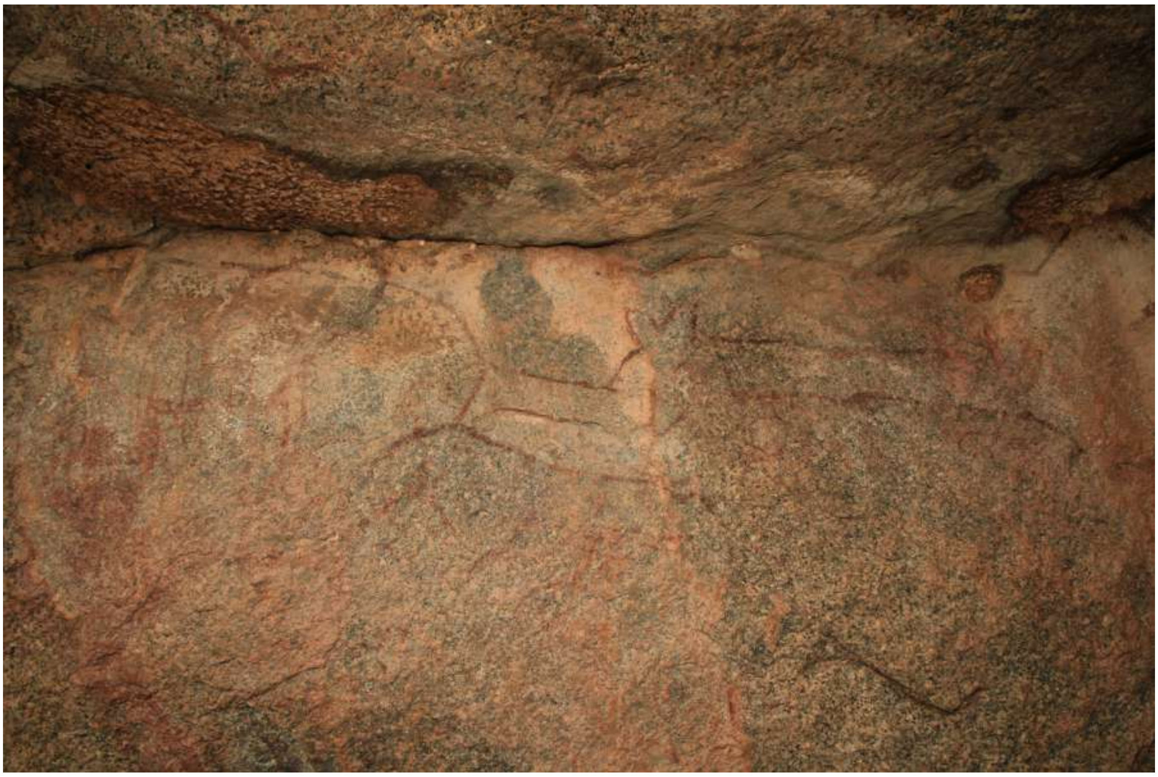


Fig.4.4.13a Scene of Deer like sign

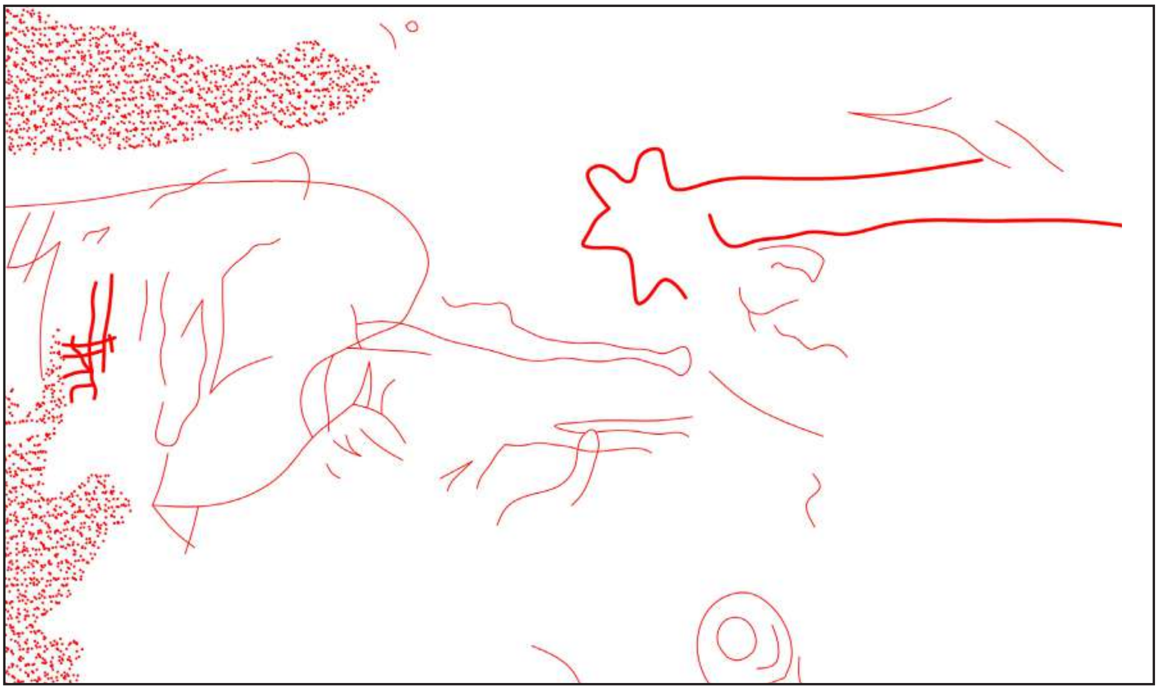


Fig.4.4.13b Scene of Deer like sign

This panel of drawings shows the natural environment (Fig. 4.4.14a), with cows and deer imageries. The body of the deer is filled with a cross and straight lines. Behind the animals, two hills are drawn by the side of a flowing water body. Tree motifs are depicted on the hills. Many figures are not visible in the panel; some are faded with overlapped paintings of different periods.

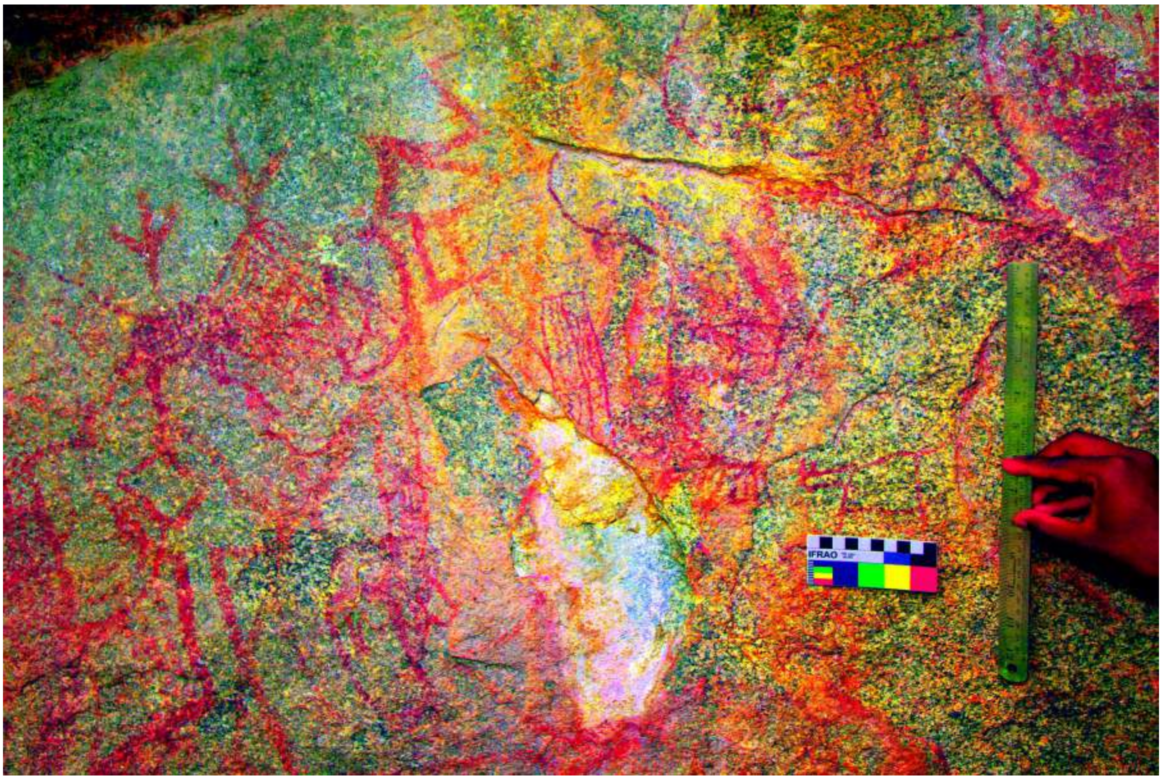


Fig 4.4.14a Scene of environment with Deer

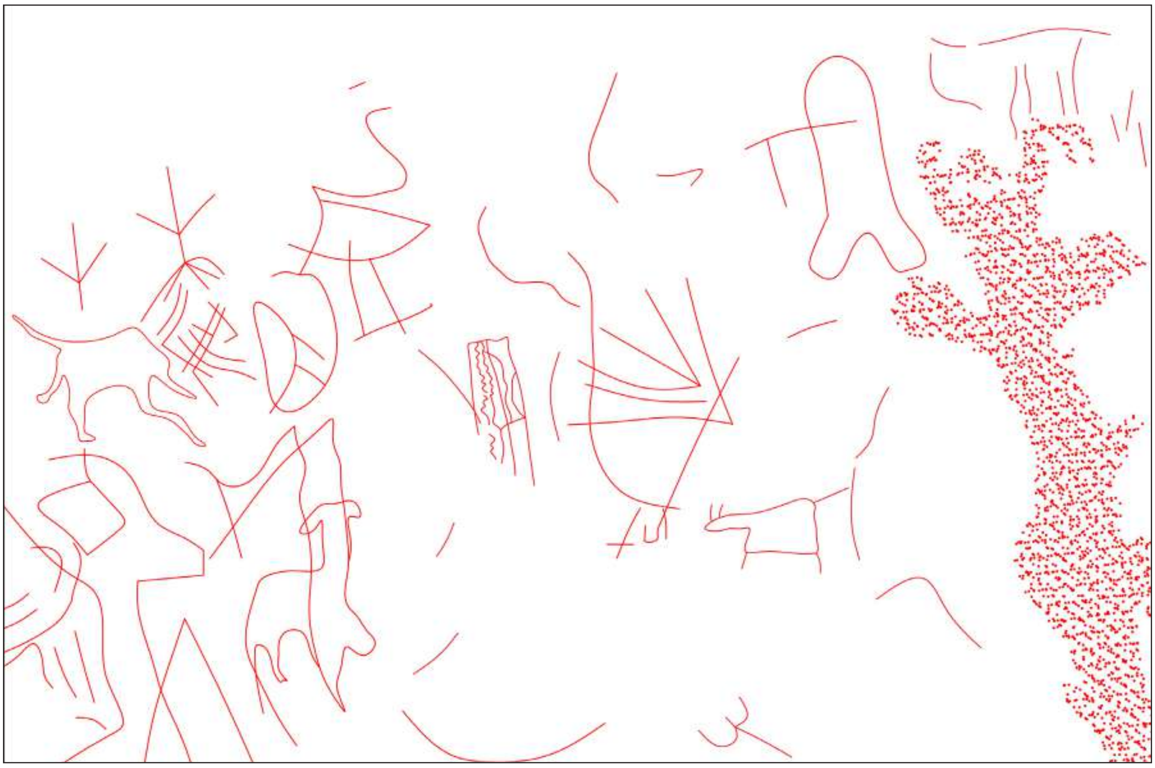


Fig 4.4.14b Scene of environment with Deer

Left side of this panel is drawn with an animal and geometric lines (Fig. 4.4.15a). Some paintings show x-ray character. Similarly, in some places, new paintings with overlapping figures are seen.

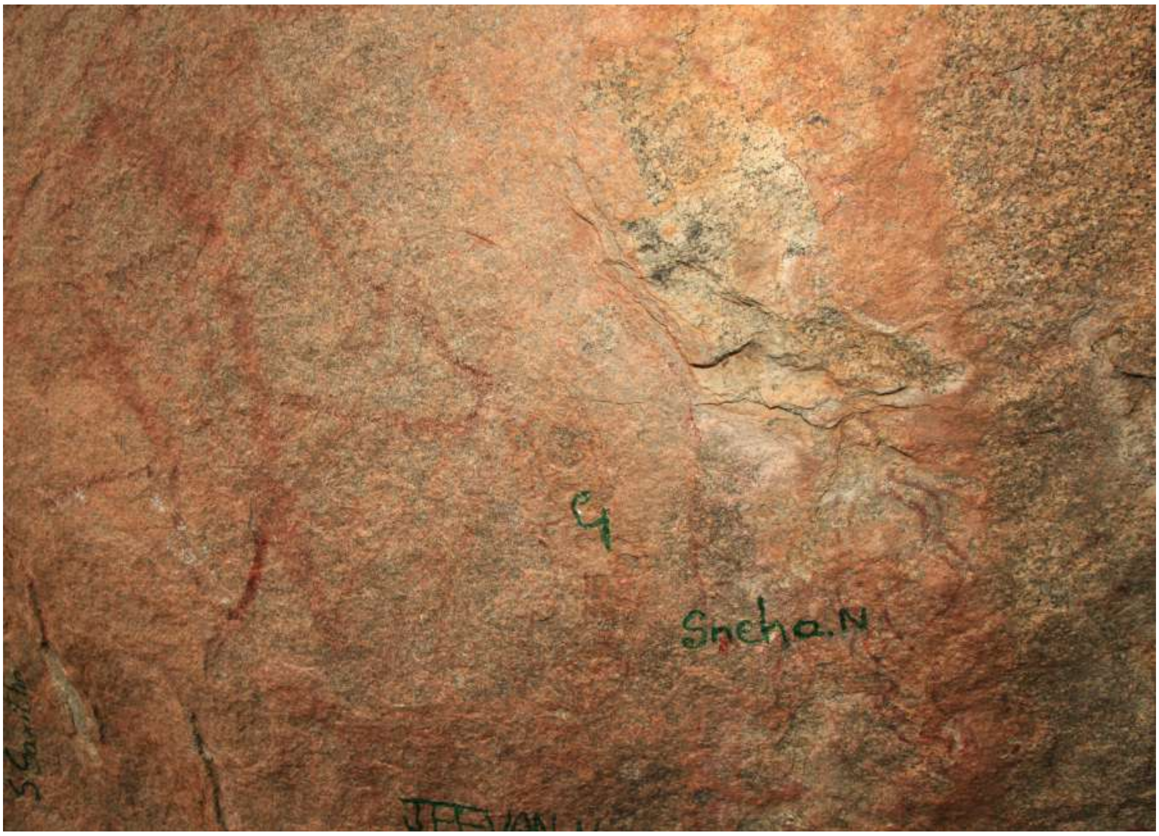


Fig. 4.4.15a Scene of X-ray form of animal

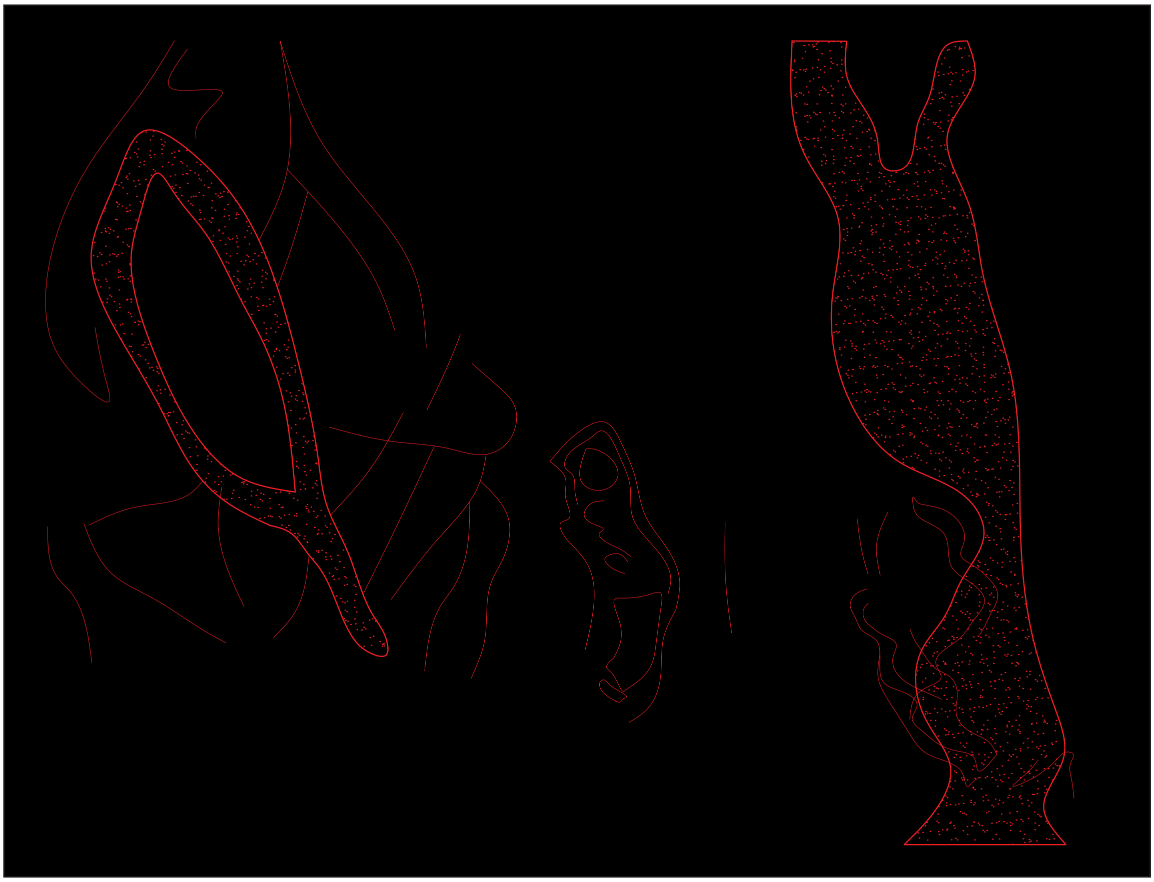


Fig. 4.4.15b *Scene of X-ray form of animal*

The figure of a deer is drawn in a linear pattern and the body part is filled with red colour (Fig. 4.4.16a). It is small in size and has an elegant design. Some other paintings have been painted near this painting.

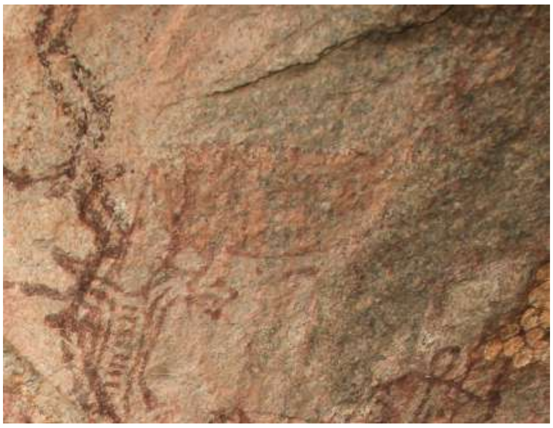


Fig.4.4.16a Dear with a hunting dog

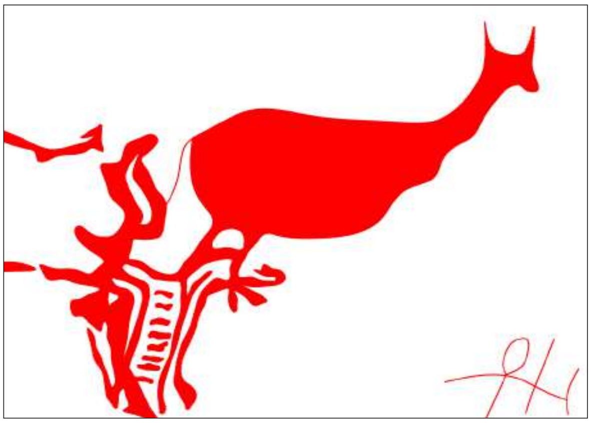


Fig.4.4.16b Dear with a hunting dog

Here are some drawings that are not easy to understand (Fig. 4.4.17a). These are planned and drawn. However, the lines found here are of different nature.

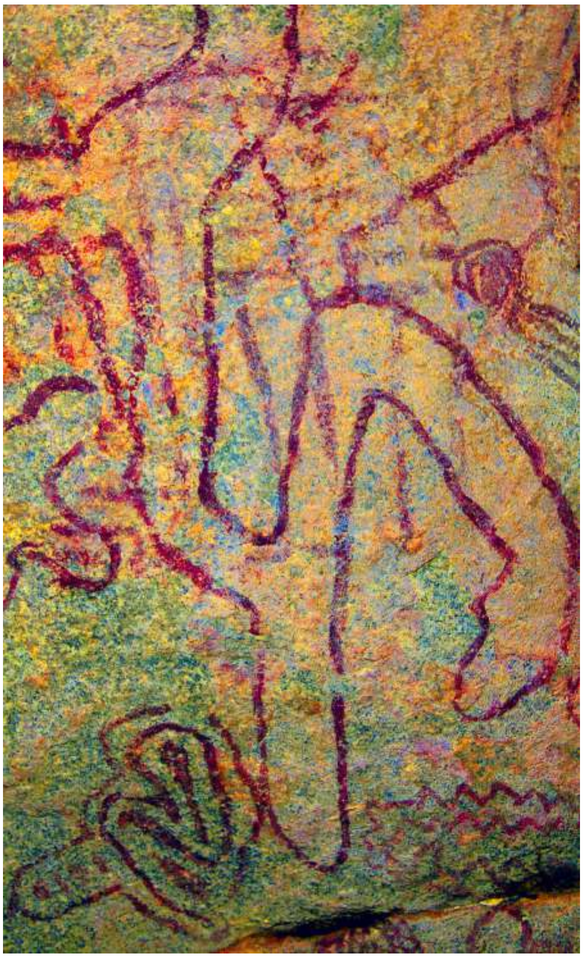


Fig. 4.4.17a Unidentified

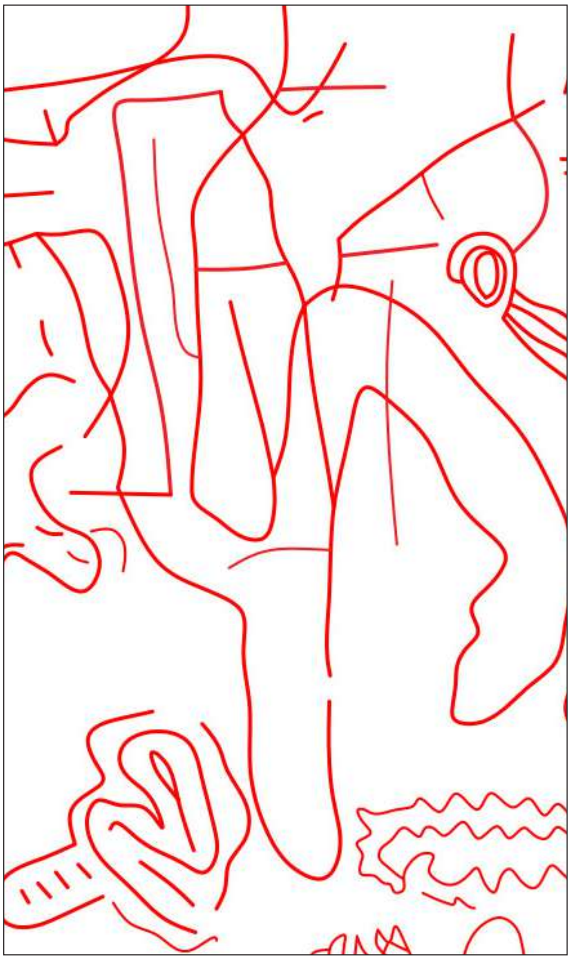


Fig. 4.4.17b Unidentified

4.5 Kilvalai

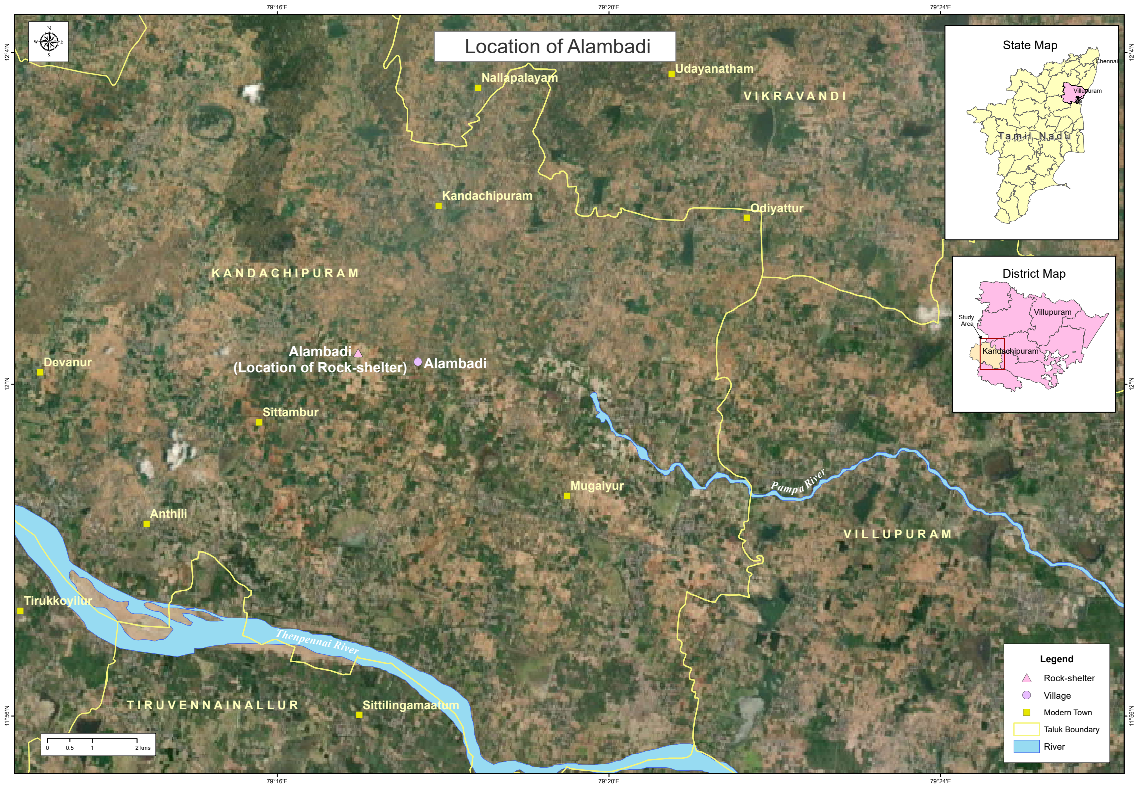
The village Kilvalai (Lat. 12.02944 N; Long. 79.33222 E) is located 23 km west of Villupuram, on the Tiruvannamalai road, in Tirukovilur taluk of Villupuram district. and to the south of the river Thenpennai (Maps 4.5.1-4.5.2). The painted rock shelters, known as Rathakudaikal, are located to the west of the village. The pigment used is red. There is a habitation mound on the southern side of the road near Melvali. The urn burial site called Madamadakkasal is located further south of the habitation mound. There are two groups of rock paintings. The first group of paintings is not well preserved and the second group is adequately preserved.

Rock shelter

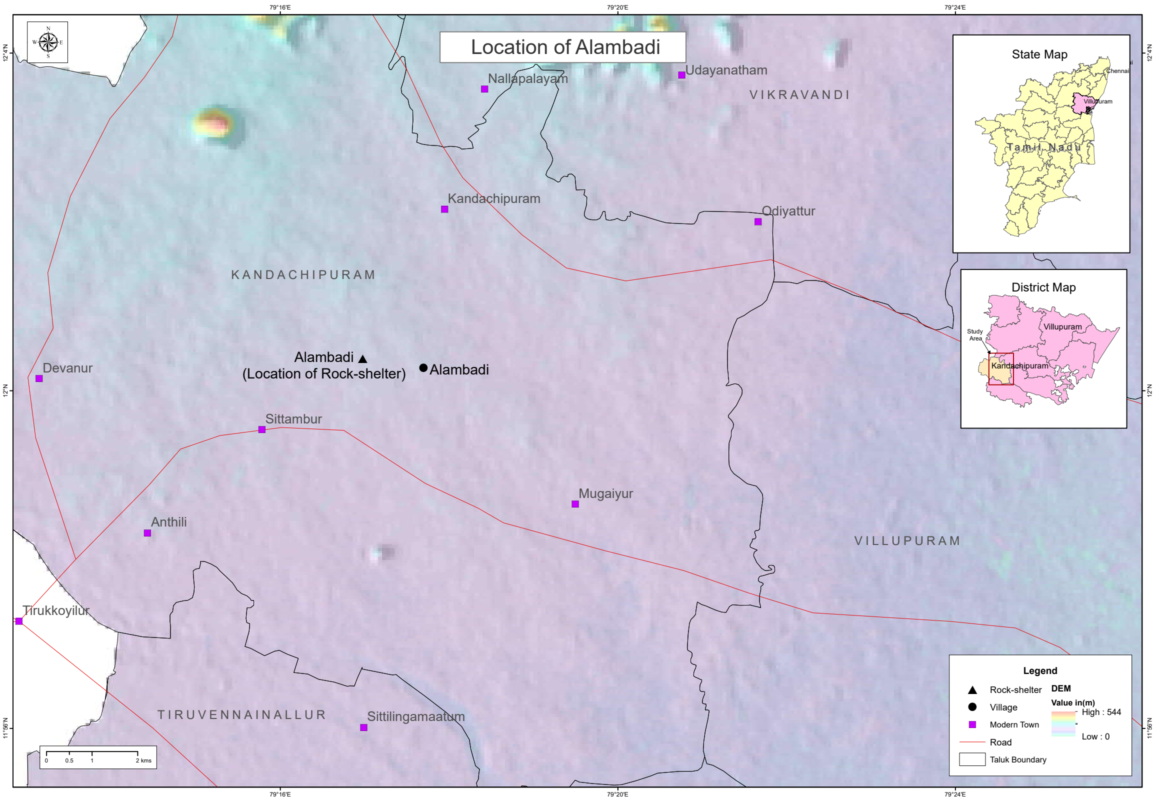
The total length of the rock shelter is approximately 12 m and the total height of the of the shelter is about 5 m. The total length of the painted surface (Figs. 4.5.1 - 4.5.5) is about 10 metre.

Description

The second groups of paintings consist of nearly 40 imageries executed in red. There are human and animal figures which were drawn individually and collectively.


Location of Alambadi
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Villupuram
District Map
Villupuram
Kandachipuram
Study Area
Nallapalayam
Udayanatham
VIKRAVANDI
Kandachipuram
Odiyattur
KANDACHIPURAM
Alambadi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Alambadi
Devanur
Sittambur
Mugaiyur
Pampa River
VILLUPURAM
Anthili
Tirukkoyilur
Thenpennai River
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Sittilingamaatum
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
79°16'E
79°20'E
79°24'E
12°4'N
12°N
11°56'N
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.5.1 Location of Kilvalai


Location of Alambadi
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Villupuram
District Map
Villupuram
Kandachipuram
Study Area
Nallapalayam
Udayanatham
VIKRAVANDI
Kandachipuram
Odiyattur
KANDACHIPURAM
Alambadi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Alambadi
Devanur
Sittambur
Mugaiyur
VILLUPURAM
Anthili
Tirukkoyilur
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Sittilingamaatum
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 544
Low : 0
79°16'E
79°20'E
79°24'E
12°4'N
12°N
11°56'N
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.5.2 Location of Kilvalai

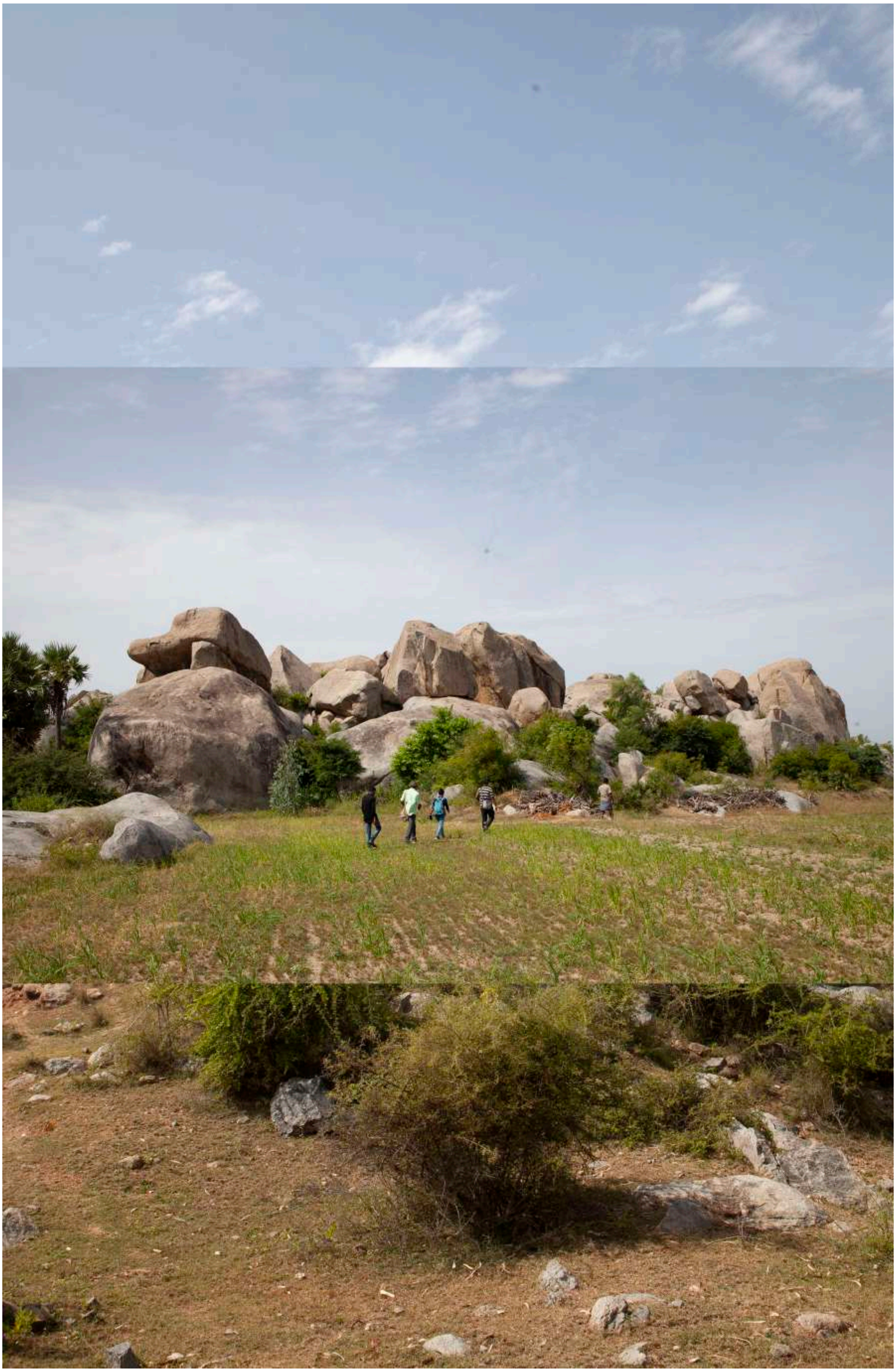


Fig. 4.5.1 General view of the rock-shelters

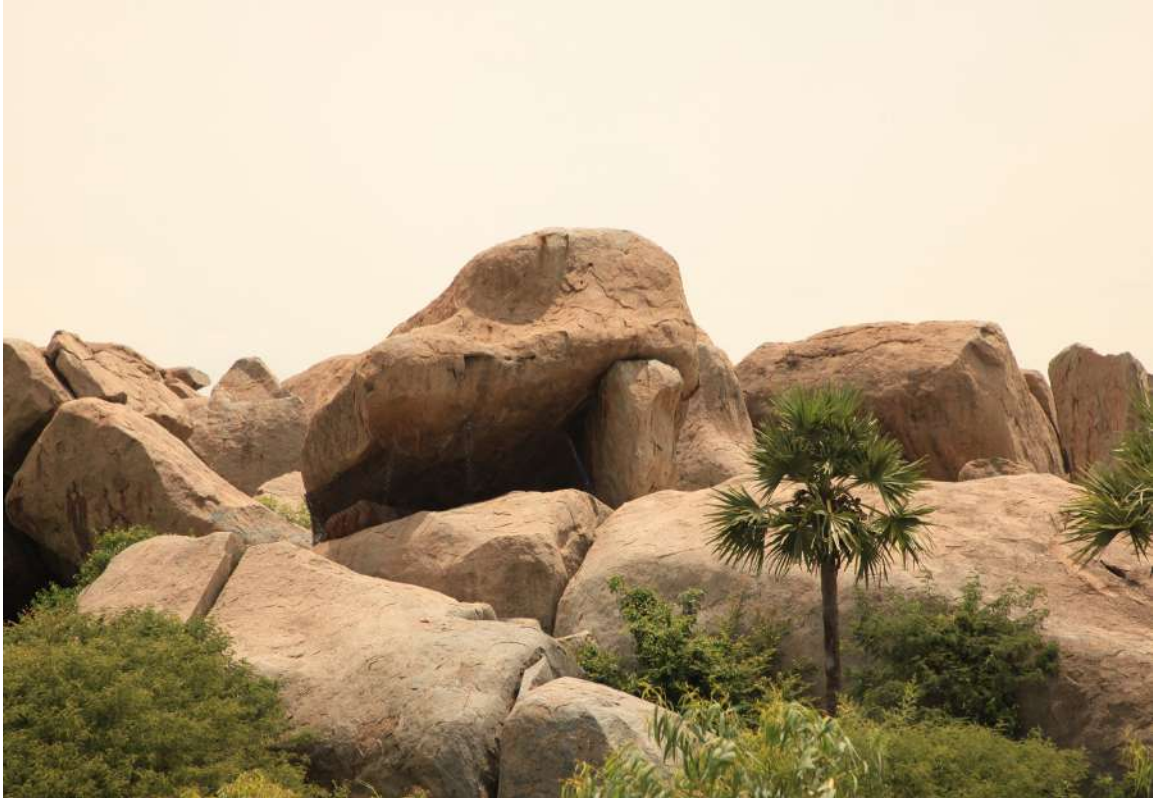


Fig. 4.5.2 General view of the rock shelters

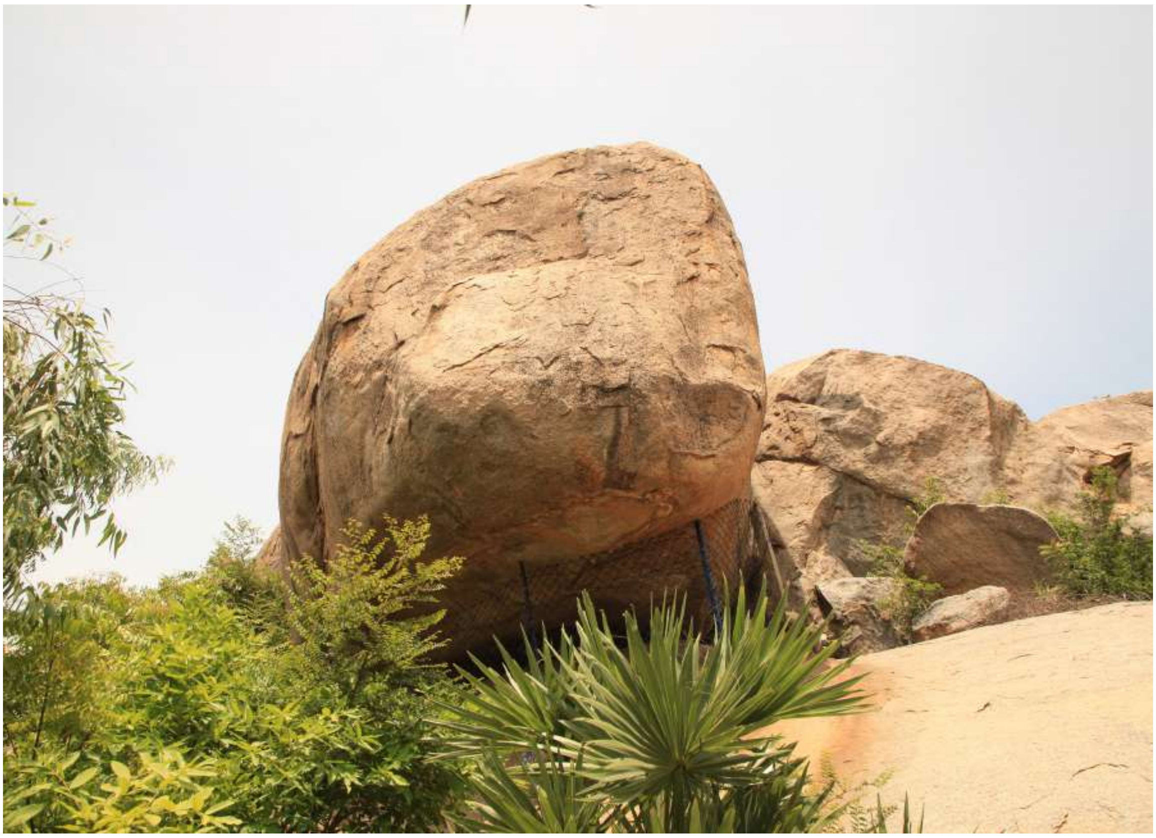


Fig. 4.5.3 General view of the rock-shelters

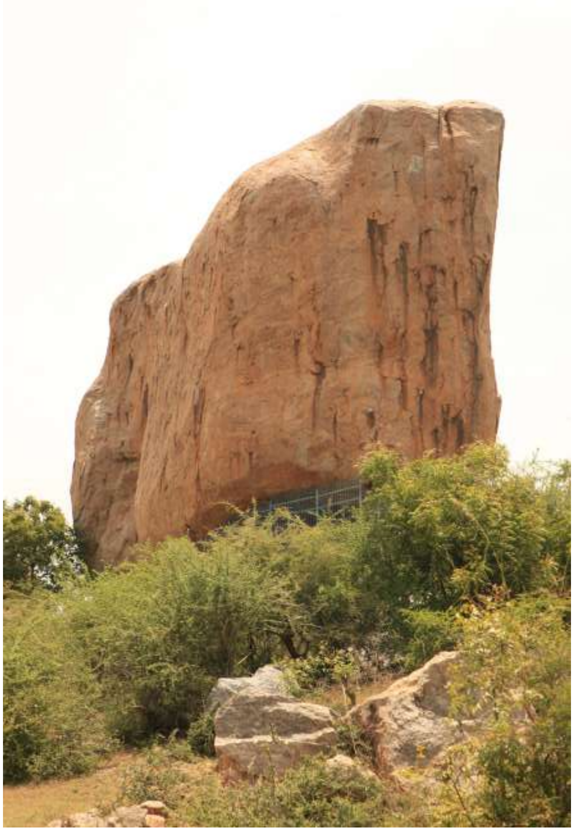


Fig. 4.5.4 General view of the rock-shelters

Fig. 4.5.5 General view of the rock-shelters

In addition, several graffiti marks are also found. These drawings were done using simple geometric lines and filled with thick dark colour-band. The imageries show varied characteristic features of human figures. Human figures are found along with animals and birds indicating human-animal relationship.

Panel Description

This panel of painting depicts human and animal figures, in total three human figures are there (Fig. 4.5.6a). All three faces were drawn side-faced with an elongated nose and resembling the face of the bird, even though it looks like a bird-head and face-shield. The first figure on the left is drawn as a person sitting on the top of a horse, the middle person is standing front of horse by holding a horse's curb-rope in his right hand and his left hand is pointing towards the third person, looks like making a conversation with him on the right side of the painting and he is used a decorated-on head with two ropes on the top. Two humans are having a short sword at their waist and all three human figures are shown with broad shoulder and small waist. The third one is seen to be greeting the other two persons like welcoming them and his left hand is holding something like a kind of rope. All three were depicted wearing a cloth around their hip covering their thigh above their knees.

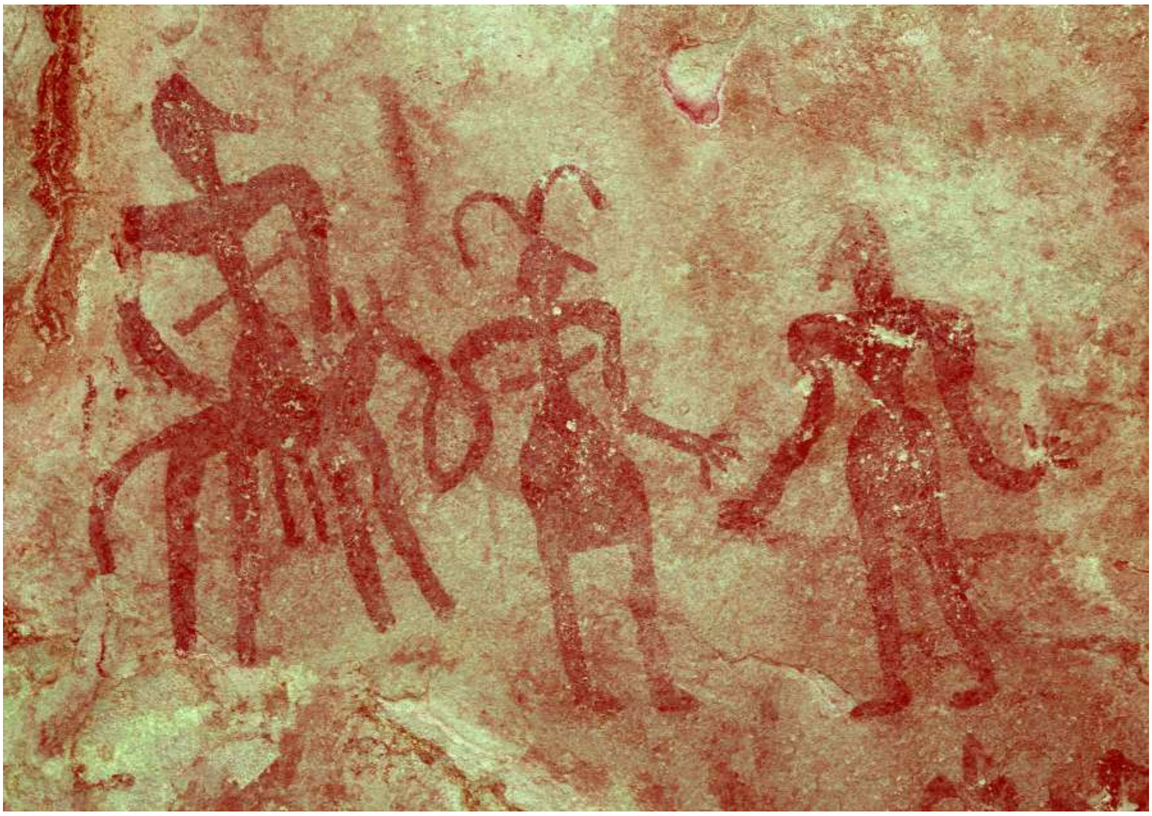


Fig. 4.5.6a Scene of hunter raiding and couple

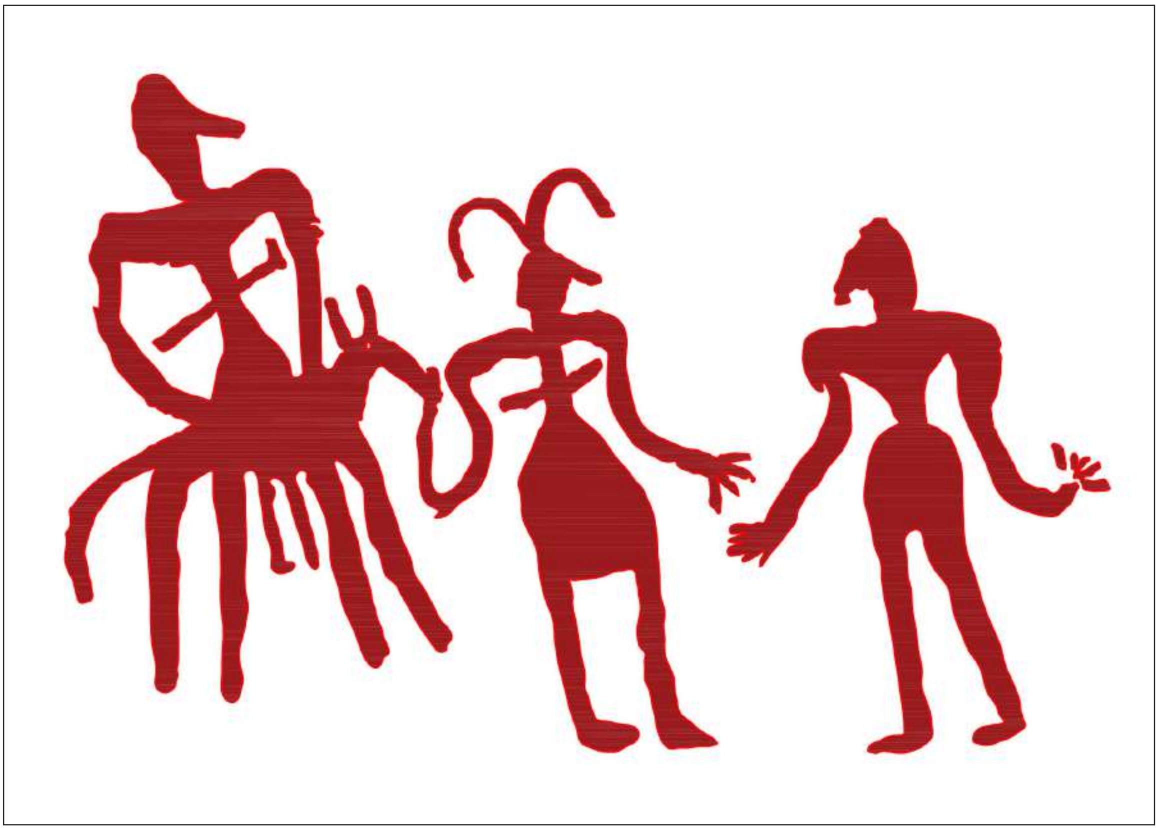


Fig. 4.5.6b Scene of hunter raiding and couple

Second panel is depicted with four human figures, drawn standing on a line, and all four were drawn holding the hands of each other (Fig. 4.5.7a). The third person is holding a long stick and at the end of the line, there is a curvy line that is not clear. All the human figures are standing on a long horizontal line, which looks like it could be a boat and they are travelling on the boat with the help of a pole.

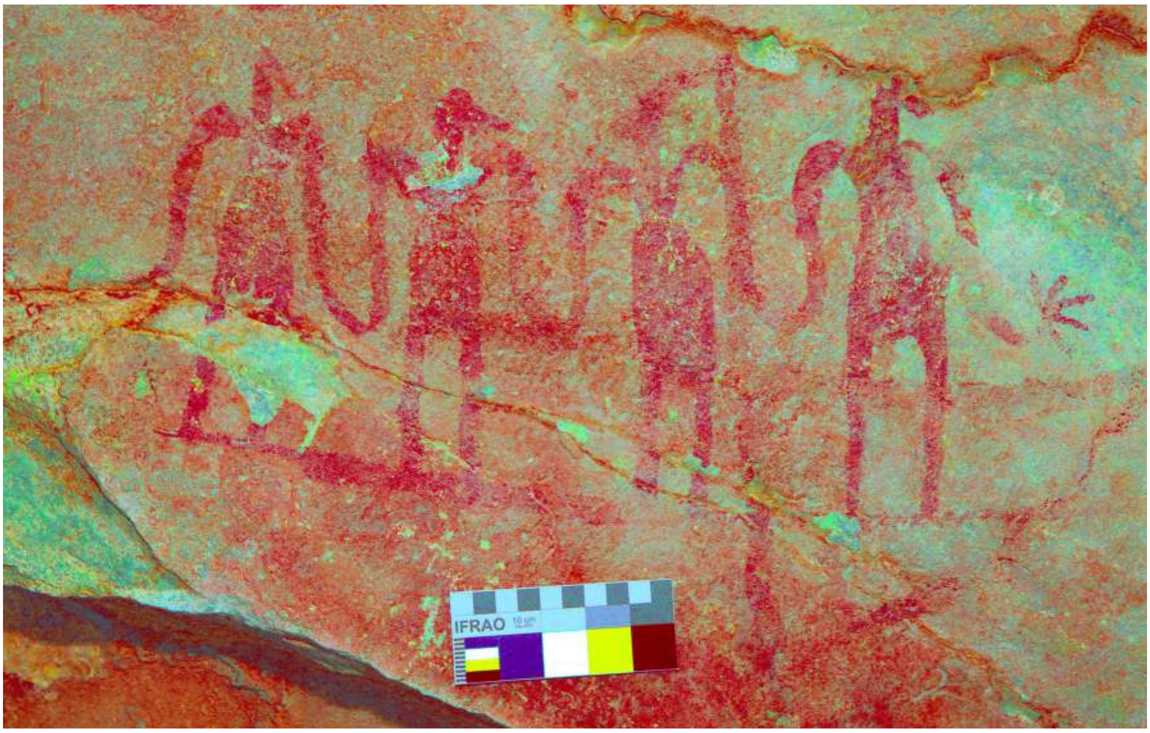


Fig. 4.5.7a *Four human Figurines standing on a boat-like object*

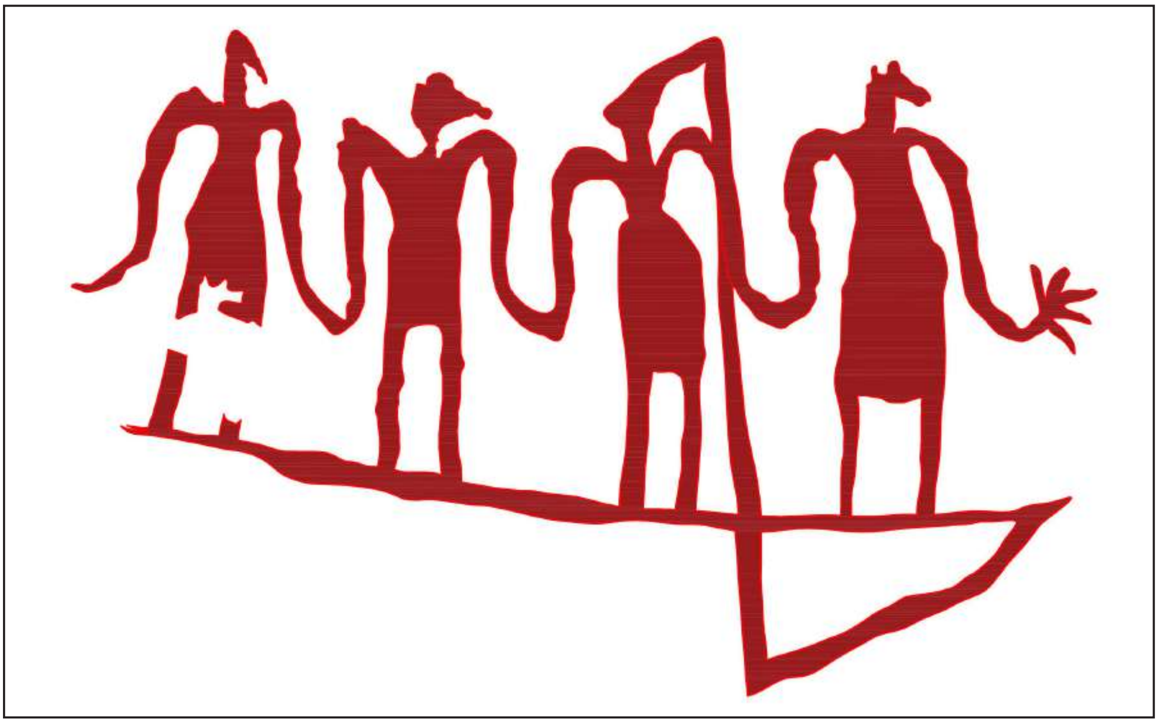


Fig. 4.5.7b *Four human figurines standing on a boat-like object*

This figure is an animal, which has four legs (Fig. 4.5.8a). The hind legs are at a straight angle and the front ones are in a curved position in a running condition. Conical-shaped head with two horns/ears and a long tail. The entire figure was drawn with thick red pigment.

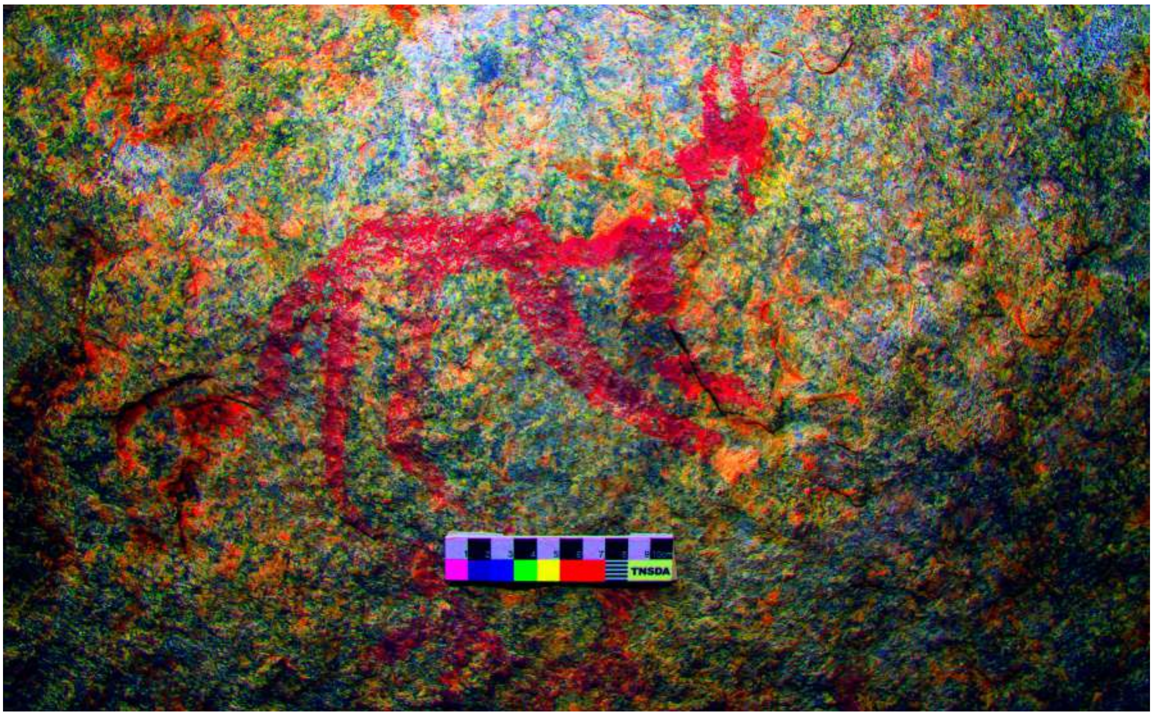


Fig. 4.5.8a An animal

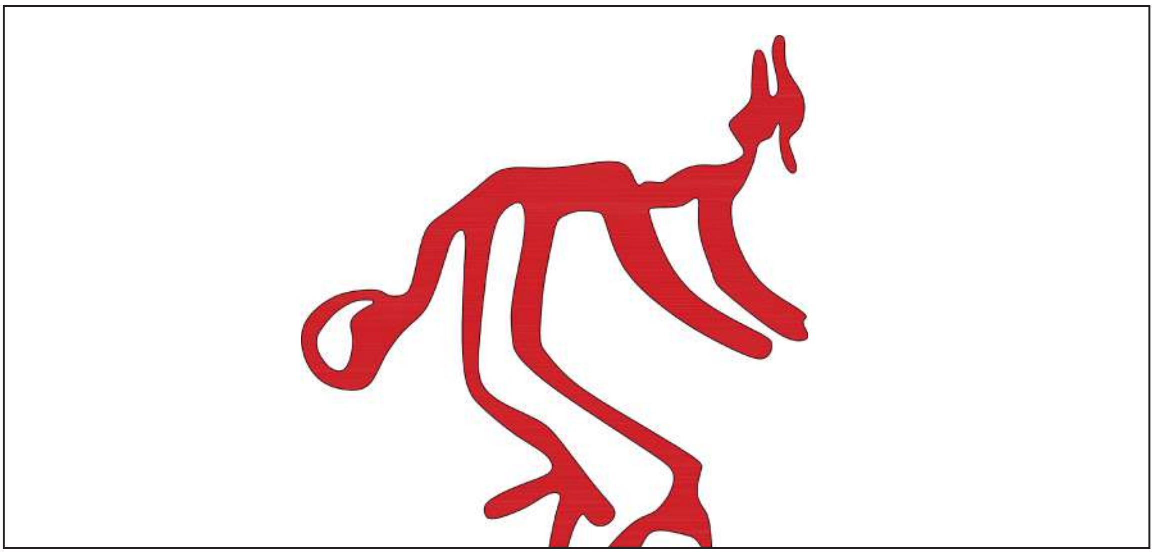


Fig. 4.5.8b An animal

This panel has a cluster of paintings depicted with three human figures (Fig. 4.5.9a). All three are in a standing position by raising their hands above heads looks likes worshipping. There are two large human figures on both sides and one small figure might be their children in the centre. Both the large figures are holding bowl like object. This picture seems like a family of a father, mother and child worshipping the god.

Between them, one painting is in faded condition and it could be some nature worship of the sun or moon. This entire scene appears to be a devotional scene.

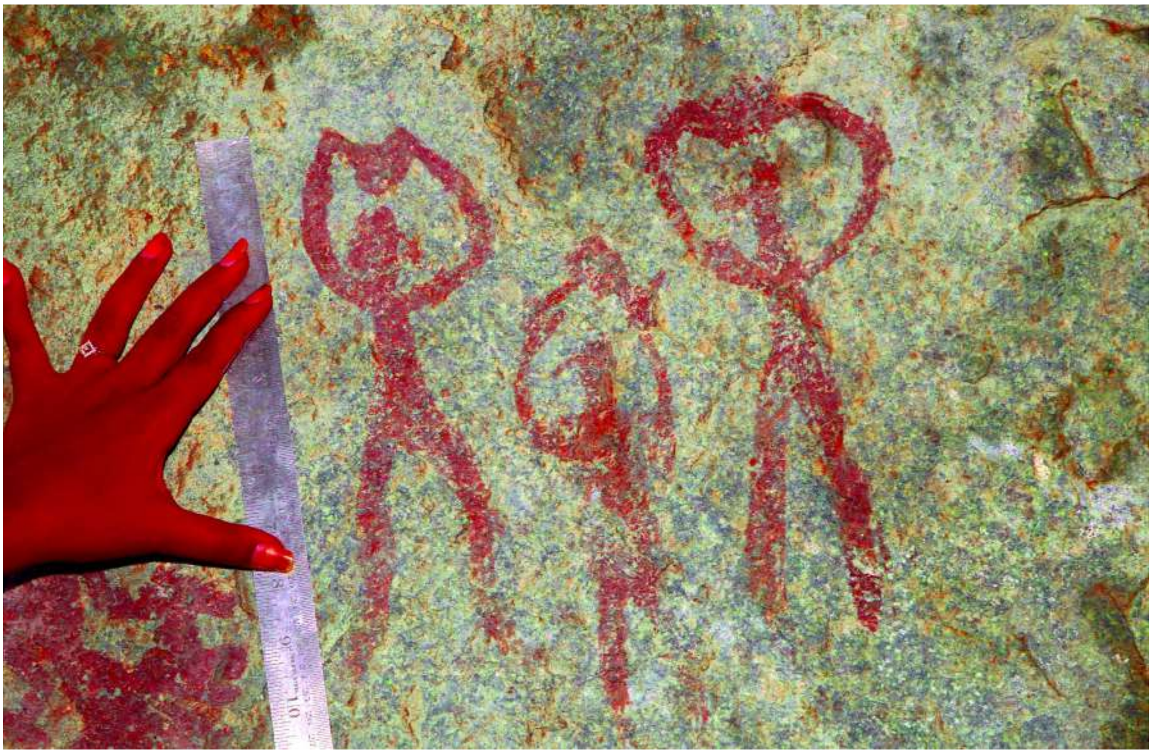


Fig. 4.5.9a Scene of a devotional

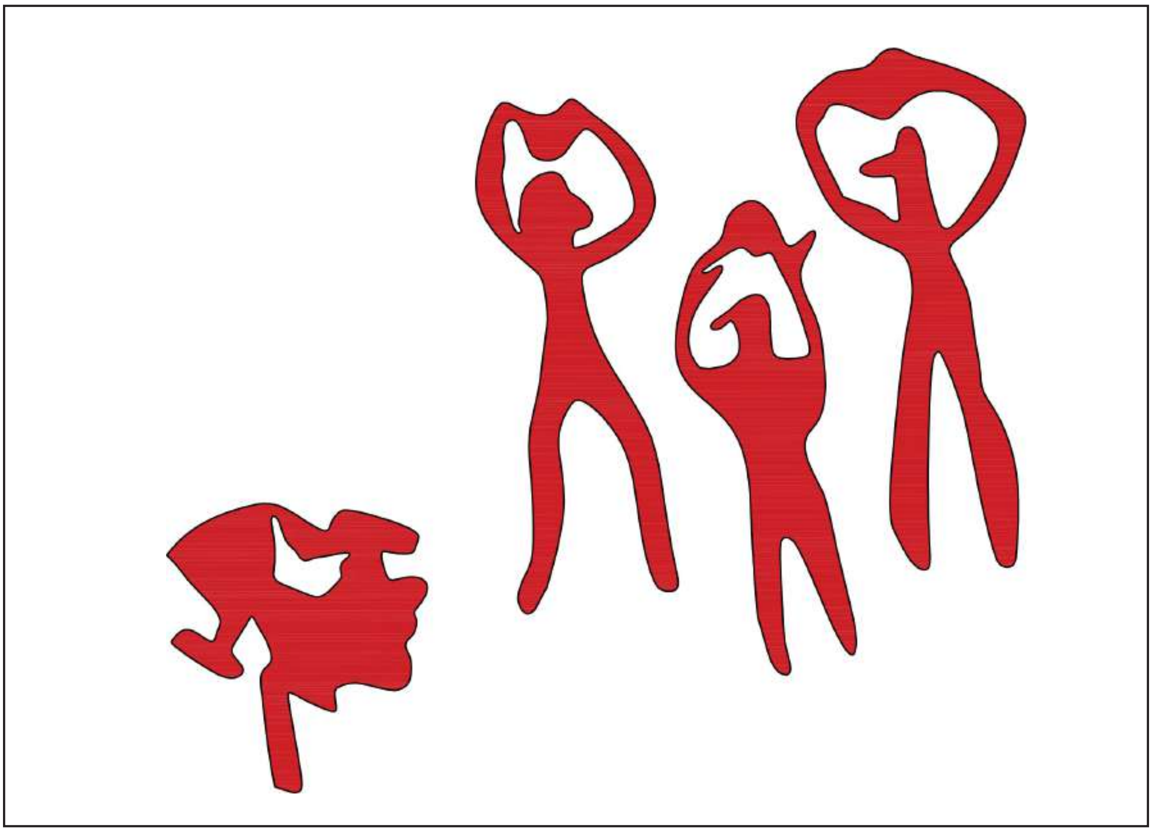


Fig. 4.5.9b Scene of a devotional

A hunter probably on an animal and holding a weapon-like object is depicted along with another human. A man standing below the animal holds a bow and arrow. A star or sun-like sign is drawn in front of them (Fig. 4.5.10a)

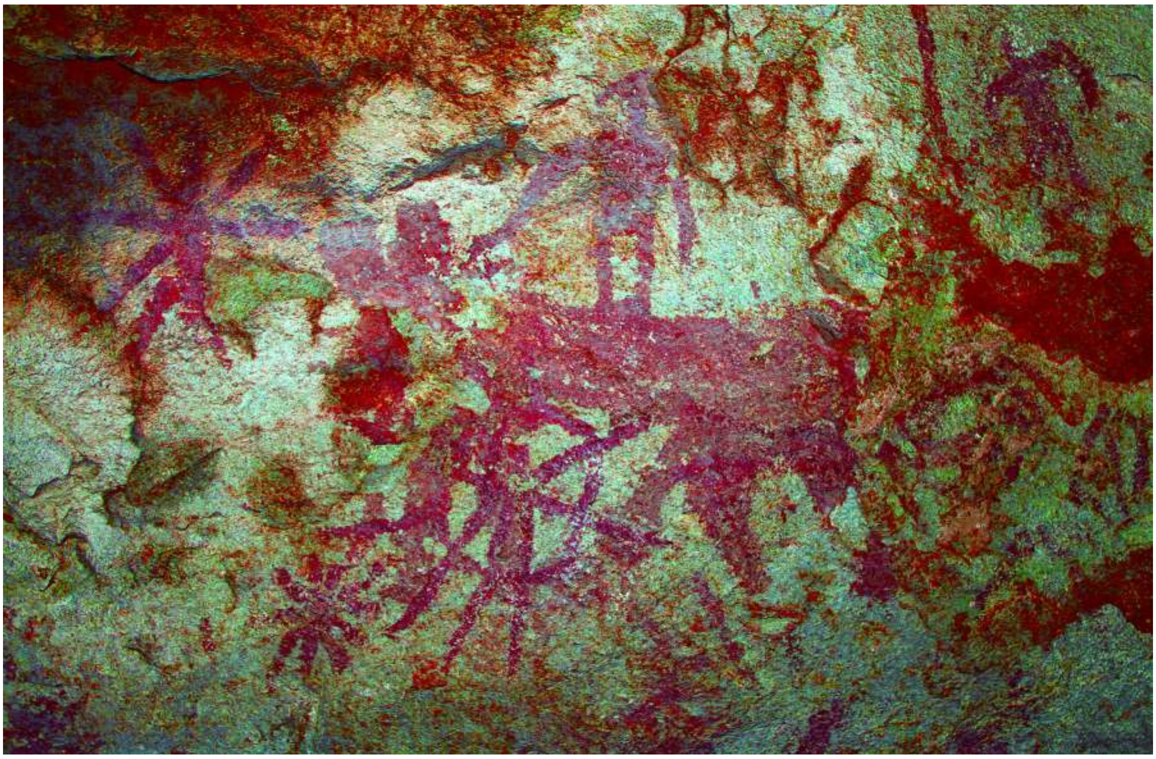


Fig. 4.5.10a Scene of hunter raiding, human and animal figures

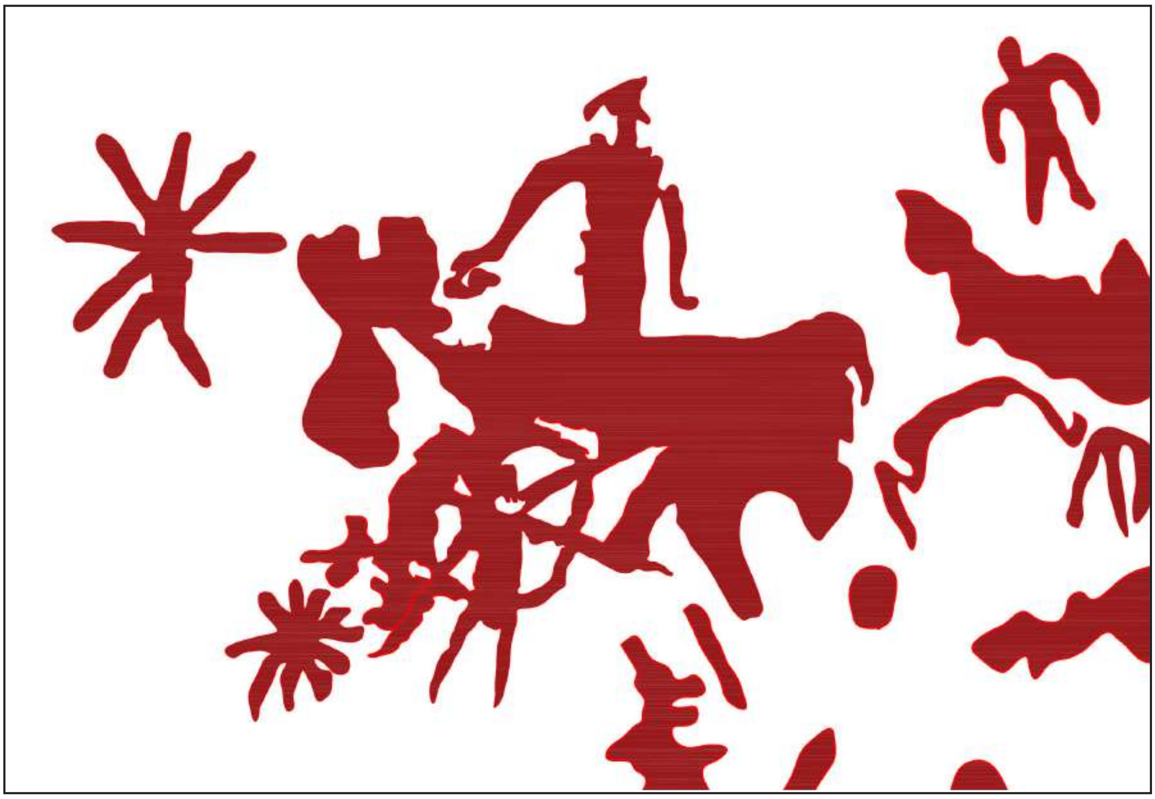


Fig. 4.5.10b Scene of hunter raiding, human and animal figures

This panel depicts a scene of warriors (Fig. 4.5.11a). Two human figures are sitting on a horse. Both men are facing face to face, with a bird head-like mask, with a broad body structure, and a small waist. The left side figure holding a horse rope with his left hand and his right-hand holding a weapon. The right figure has a weapon in his left hand and right hand holds a rope. In their hip, a scabbard is tied. The horses figure with a thin body and a long tail.

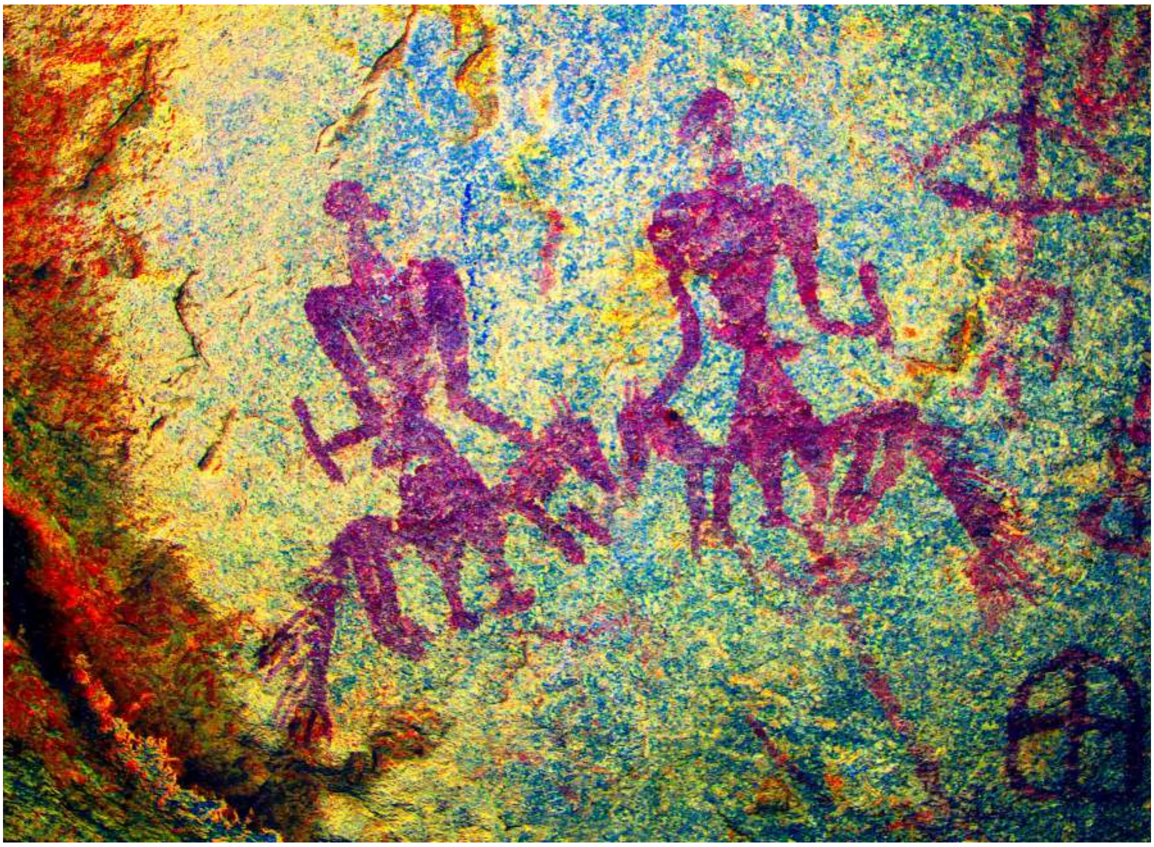


Fig. 4.5.11a Two warriors with horses

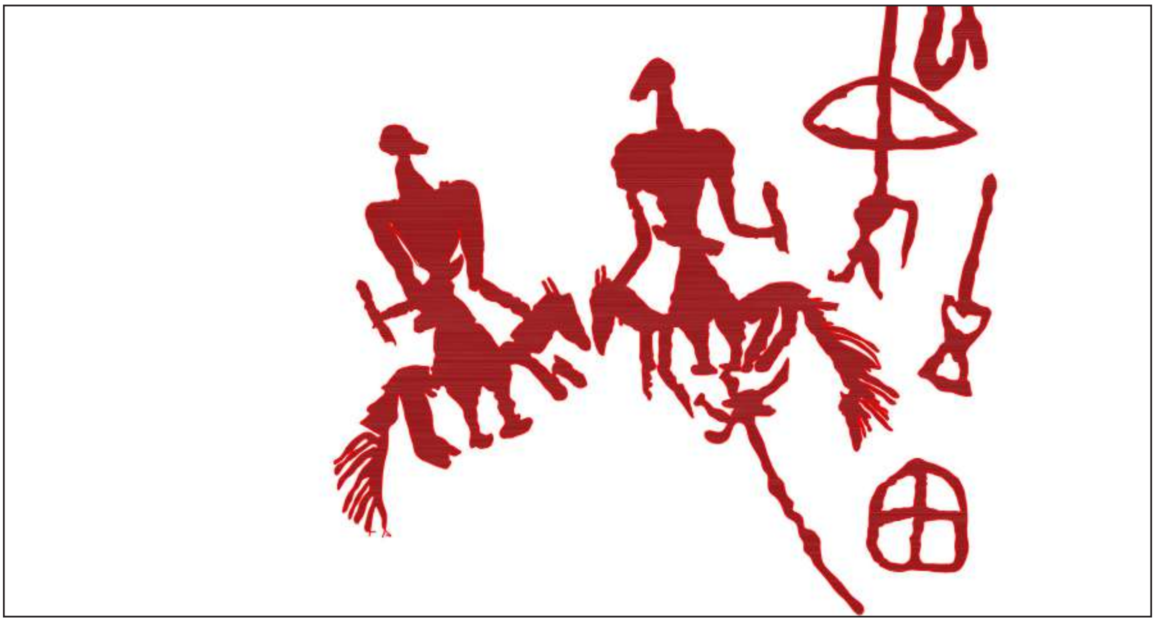


Fig. 4.5.11b Two warriors with horses

One human figure in standing posture is depicted without any weapons (Fig. 4.5.12a). A human with a broad chest and a narrow waist is depicted. The nose is shown as beaked-nose. From the waist to the legs is drawn a thick layer of painting and the foot is in faded condition. Curved lines as a long hair, were painted around the head. All this seems like some female god/female figure with open hands and visible stretched fingers.

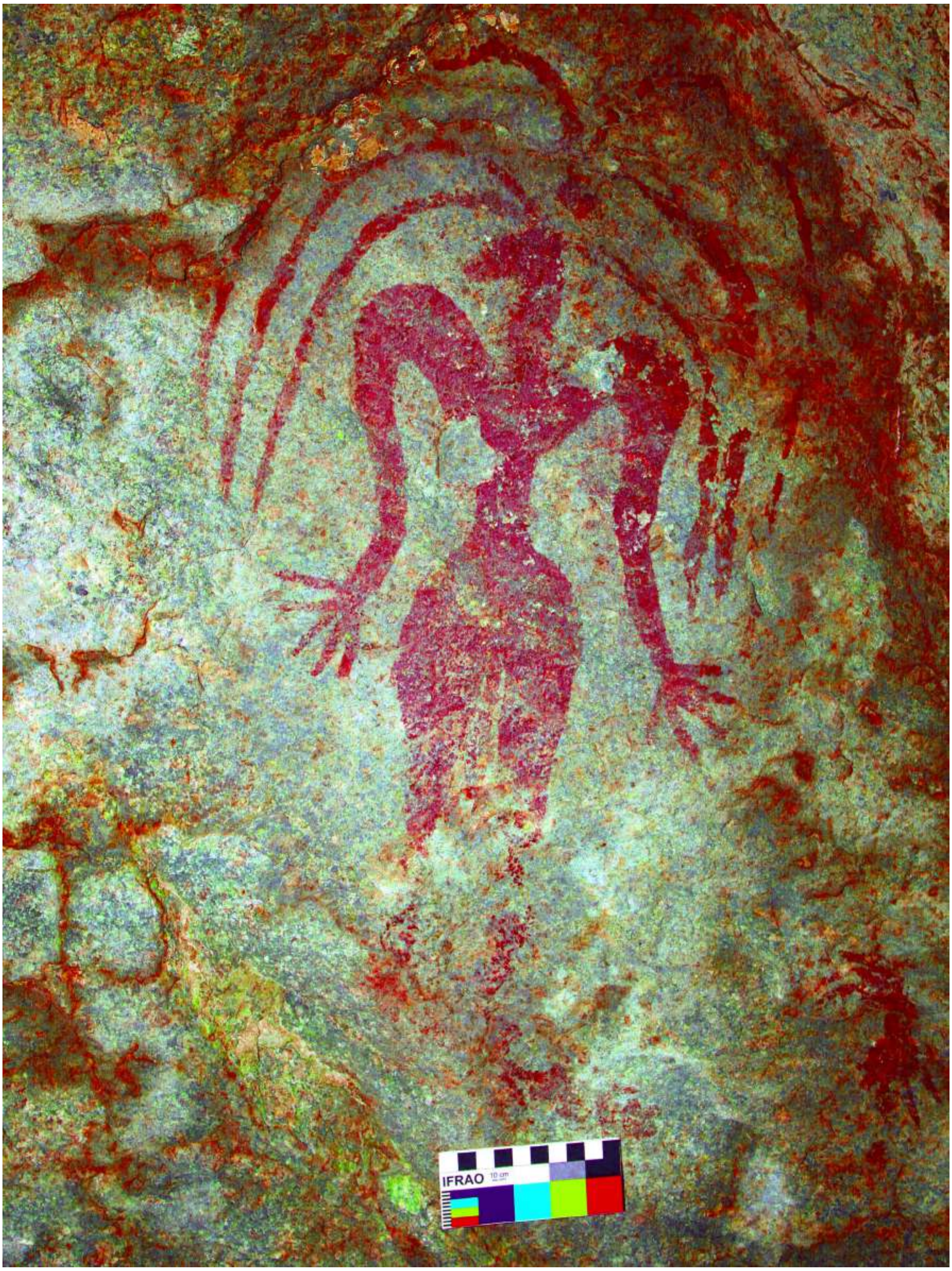


Fig. 4.5.12a Human figurine with beaked nose

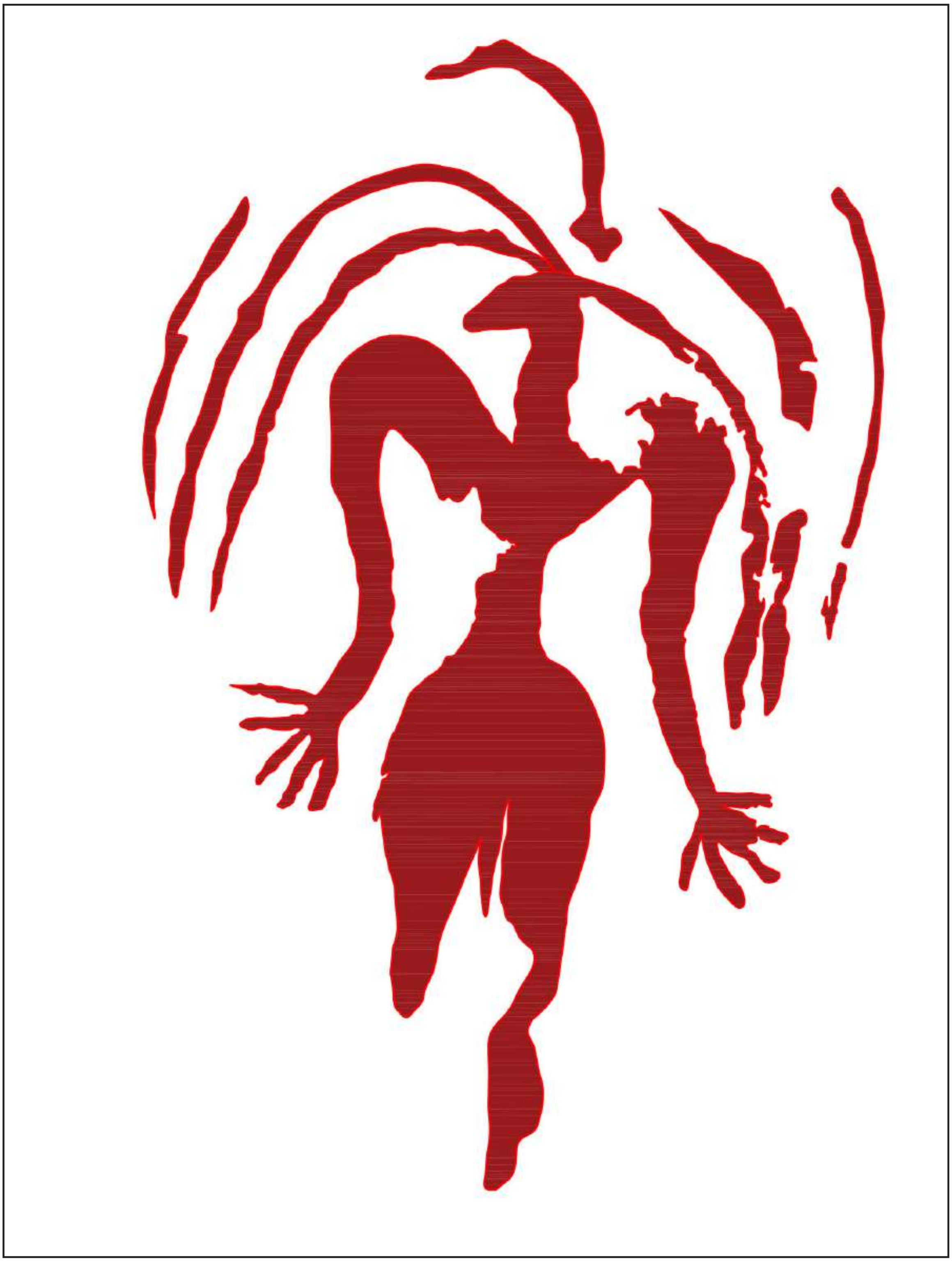


Fig. 4.5.12b Human figurine with beaked nose

This cluster of paintings has multiple human figures (Fig. 4.5.13a). On the right side, a human with broad shoulders and a narrow waist is shown standing. The drawings are slightly tilted towards the right which represents that the action is going on. He is holding a long stick in his right hand which is bent inward looking like a hunting weapon. The outline of the human body was drawn with lines and colours were filled inside, using a red colour fill.

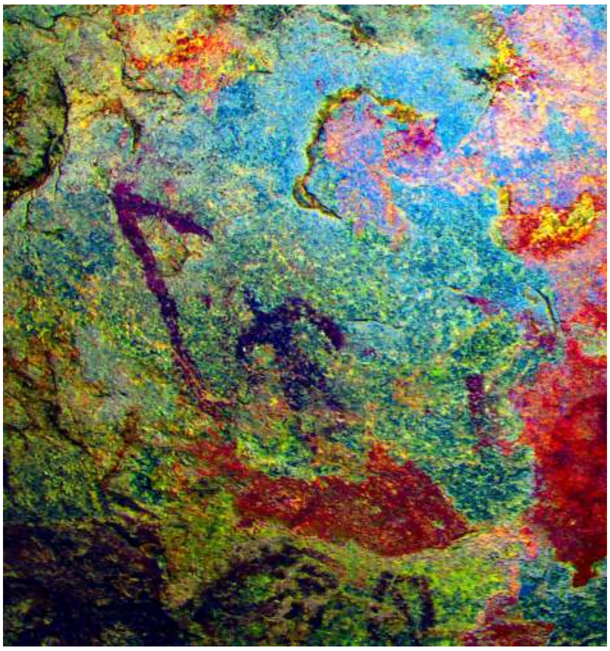


Fig. 4.5.13a Human and animal figures

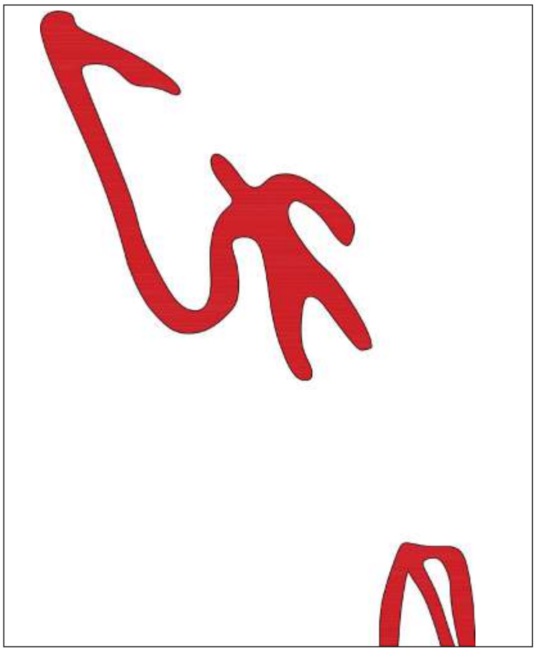


Fig. 4.5.13b Human and animal figures

This cluster of paintings depicts human figures, bow and arrow, weapons and geometric symbols (Fig. 4.5.14a). At the left side we have a bow and arrow, a pole decorated with radiating rays on both sides. A human figure with a bird-beak head, in a standing posture is drawn on the right side. A bow and arrow in front of a human figure is shown on the extreme left.

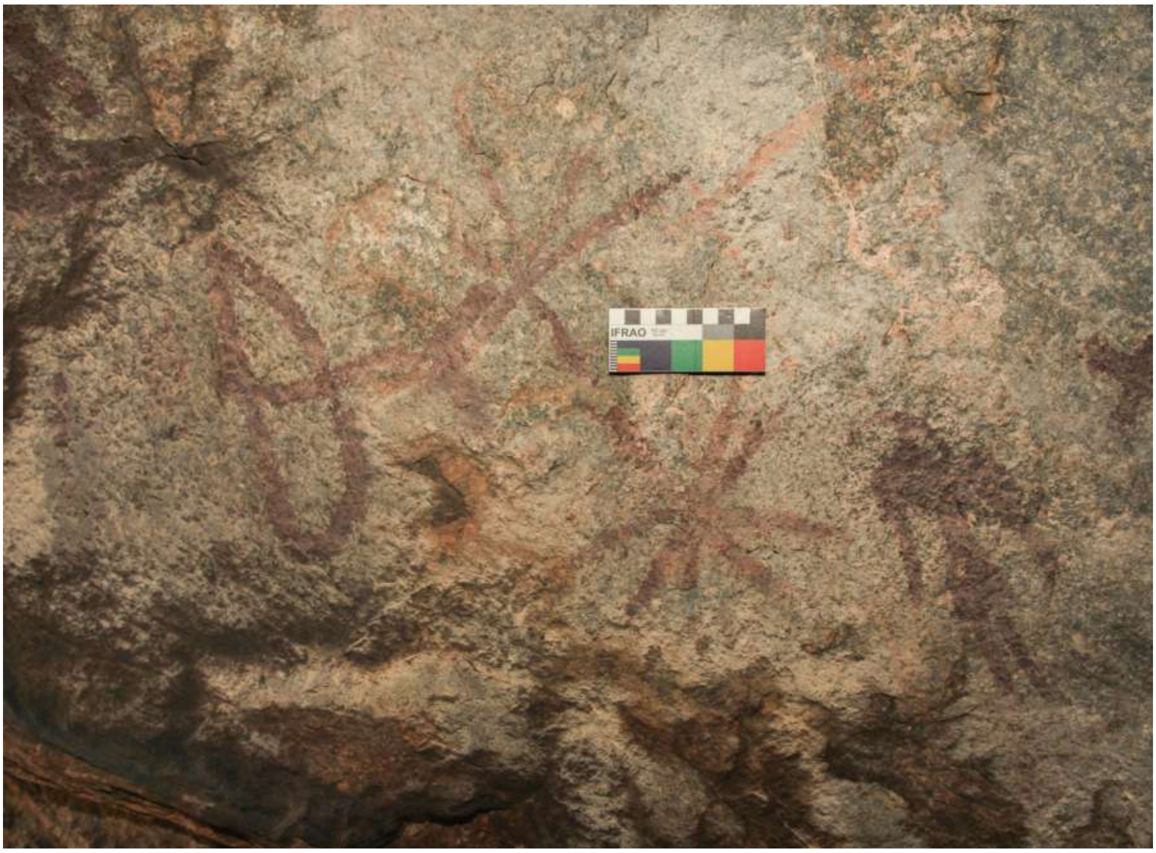


Fig. 4.5.14a Human figure, bow and arrow and a star like sign

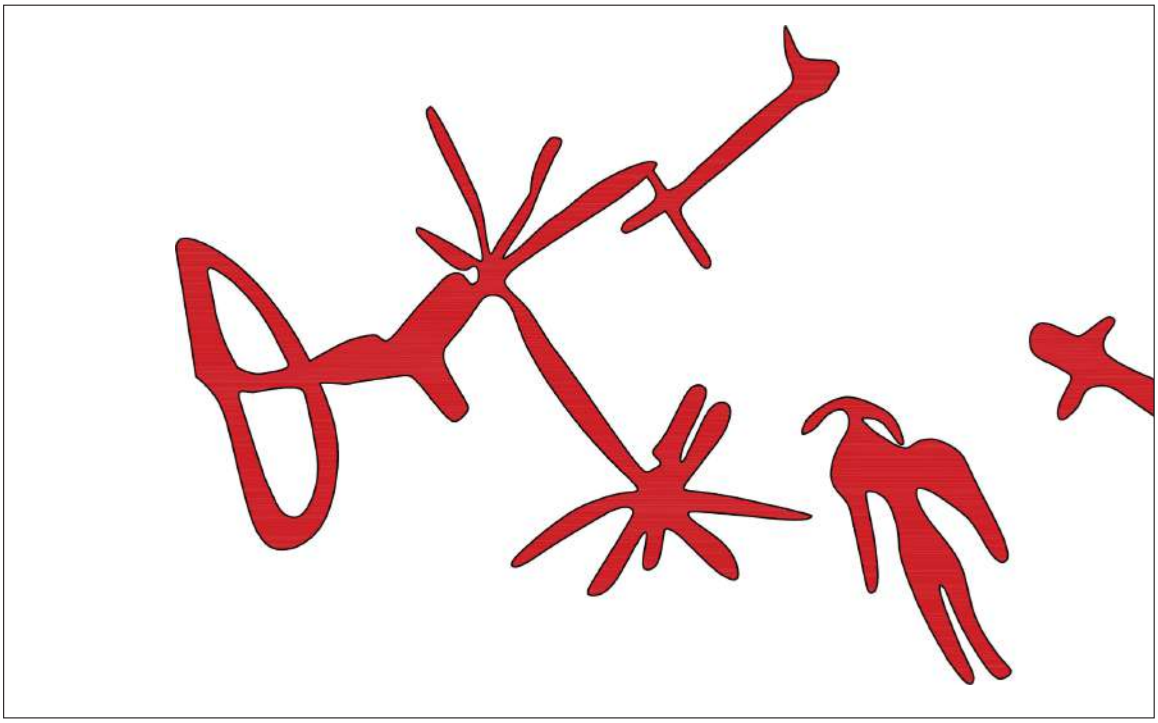


Fig. 4.5.14a Human figure, bow and arrow and a star like sign

This painting beautifully portrays a peacock image drawn with simple geometric lines (Fig. 4.5.15a). The standing peacock has a long neck and long feathers. This figure is painted with red ochre in thick lines and borders, it is filled on the inside.

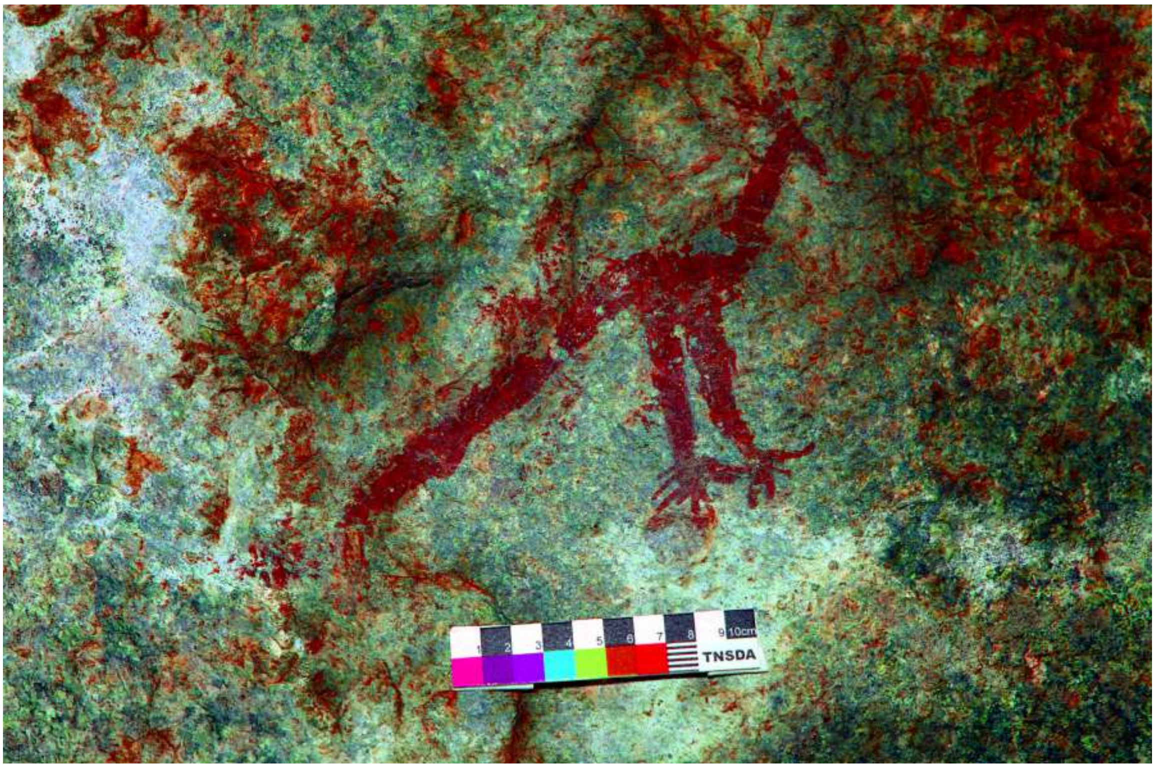


Fig. 4.5.15a A peacock

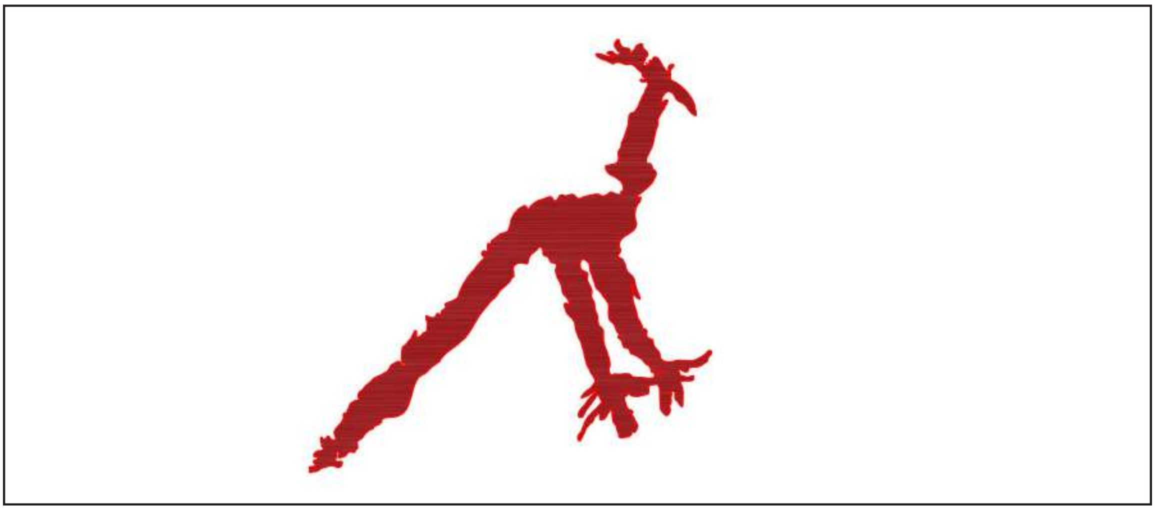


Fig. 4.5.15b *A peacock*

This panel has a depiction of five graffiti signs/symbols of different geometric shapes (Fig.4.5.16a). The first one is a leaf motif symbol of a straight line with four layers of cross lines. Second is a *damaru*-like sign tilted right. The third one looks like the comb symbol; fourth one is again a *damaru*-like sign tilted left and the final fifth one is round with a plus symbol at the centre. Some of them are very much closer to Indus Valley signs and graffiti marks.

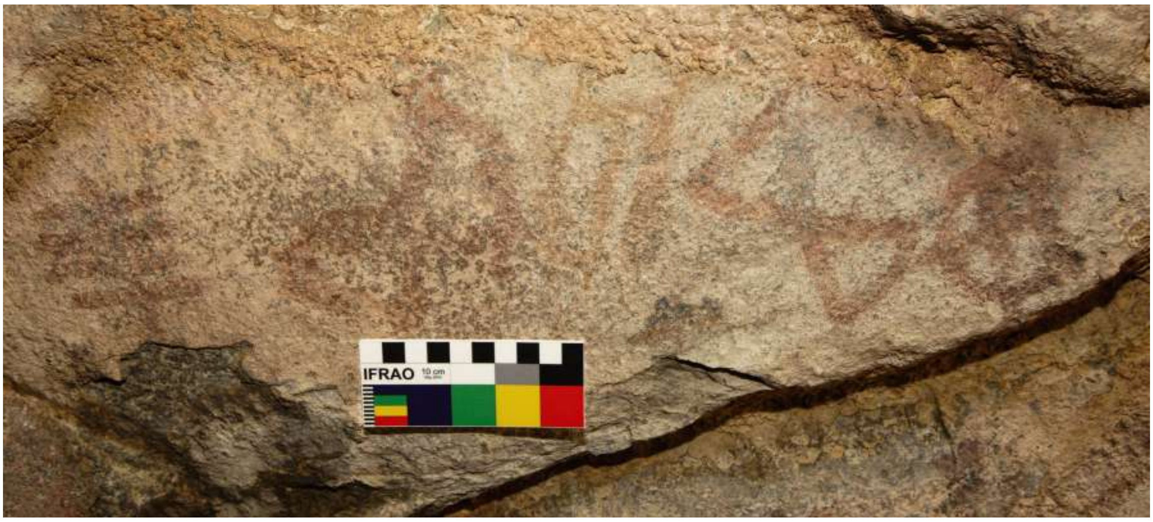


Fig. 4.5.16a Indus or Graffiti signs

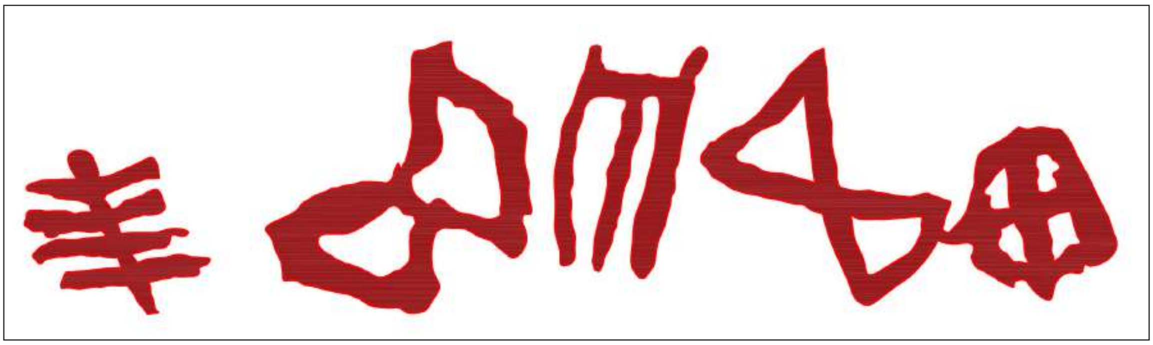


Fig. 4.5.16b Indus or Graffiti signs

Three paintings are there in this panel. One is a symbol and two are human figures (Fig.4.517a). First symbol is like a round with a plus at the centre looks like a wheel. The third painting is a human figure. Two long legs were clearly depicted. The third image is faded, and only the head portion of the bird-beak nose is visible.

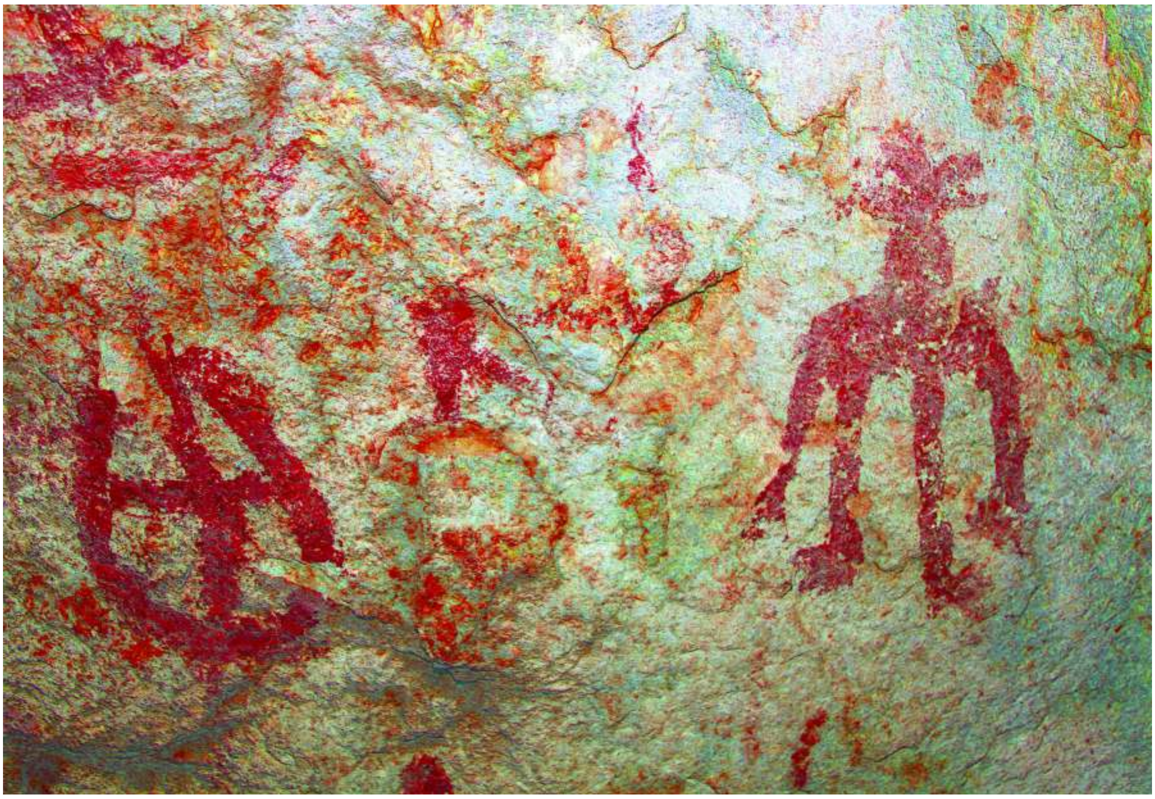


Fig. 4.5.17a Human with geometrical circle having a cross at the centre

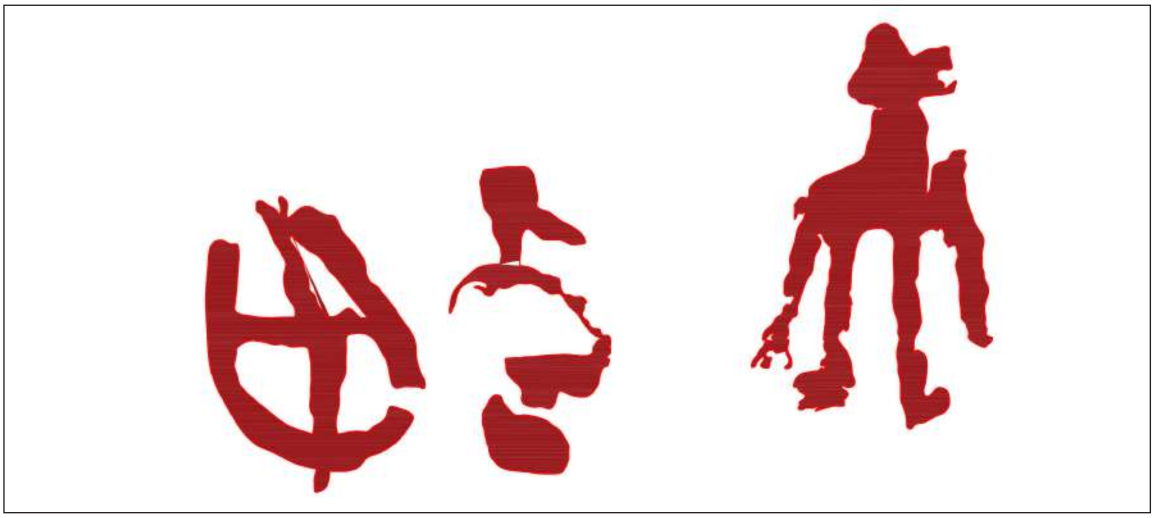


Fig. 4.5.17b Human with geometrical circle having a cross at the centre

Graffiti marks are depicted on this panel. There are circular, square and rectangular shapes drawn in this cluster (Fig. 4.5 18a). There is a rectangular box that is further divided into eight boxes. This may be related to land or celestial observation. Above it, another symbol depicting a round shape with a plus kind of symbol at the centre.

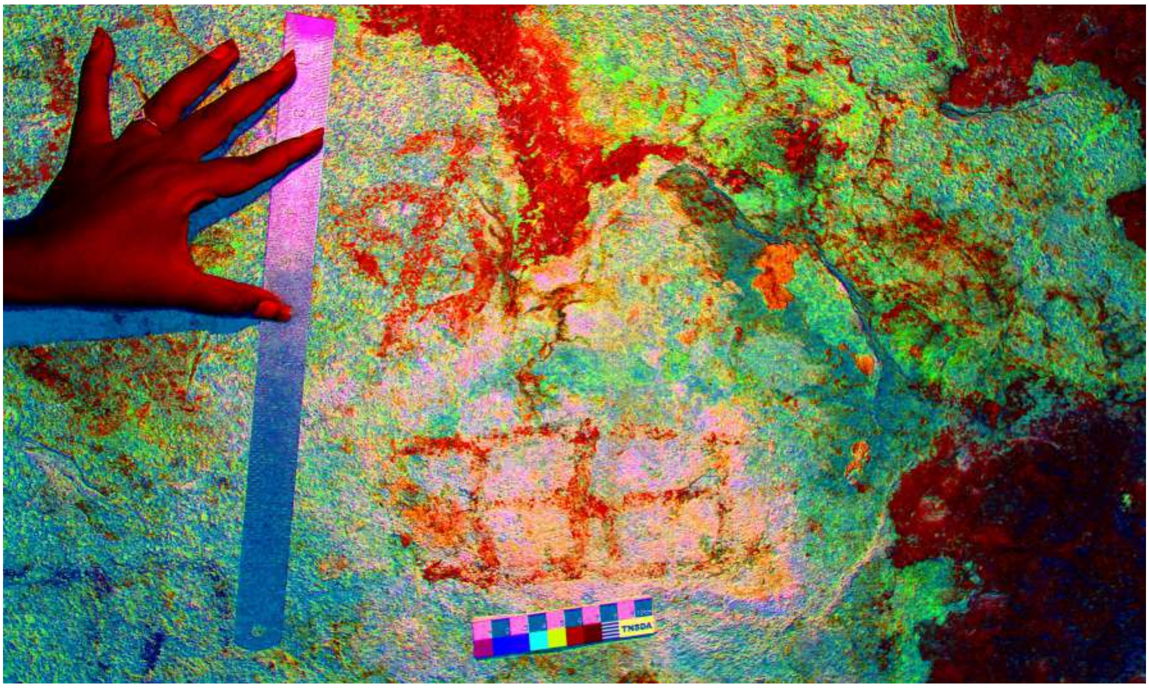


Fig. 4.5.18a Geometrical designs

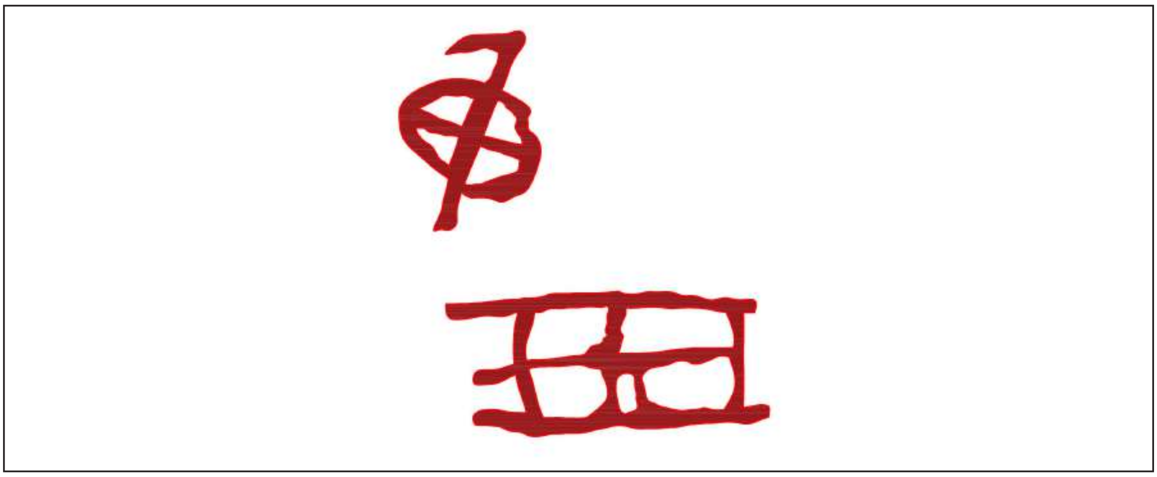
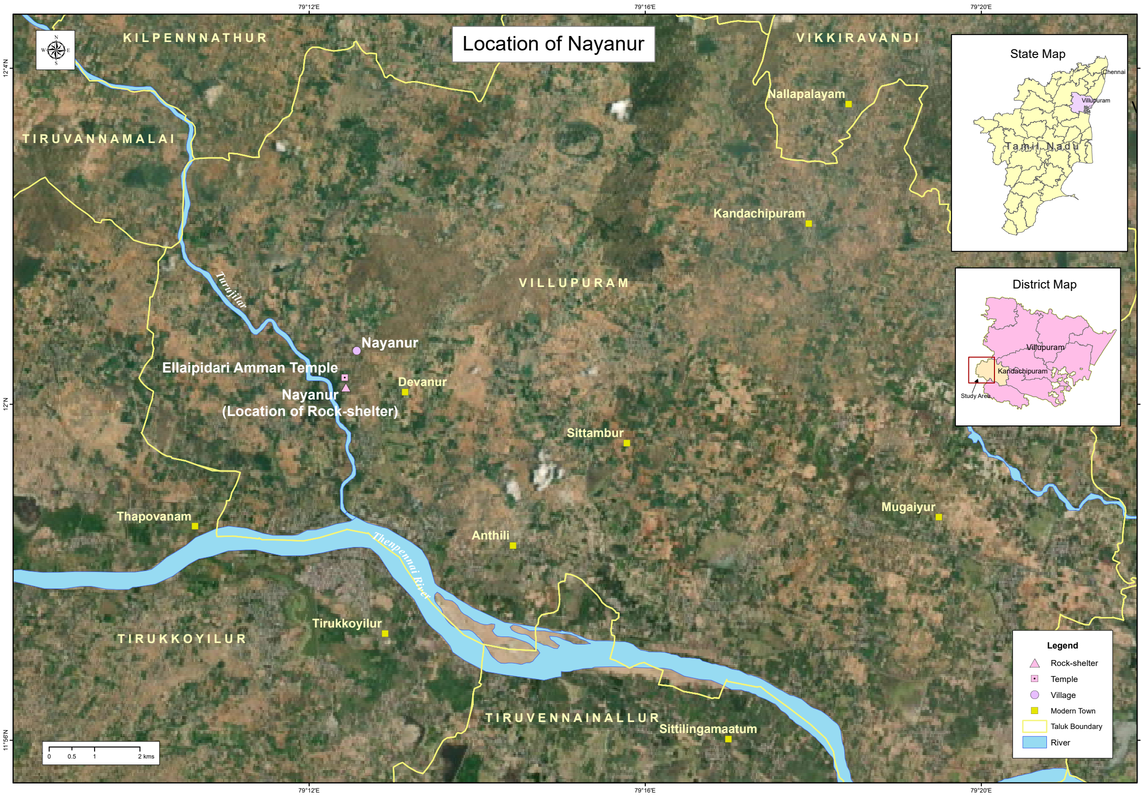


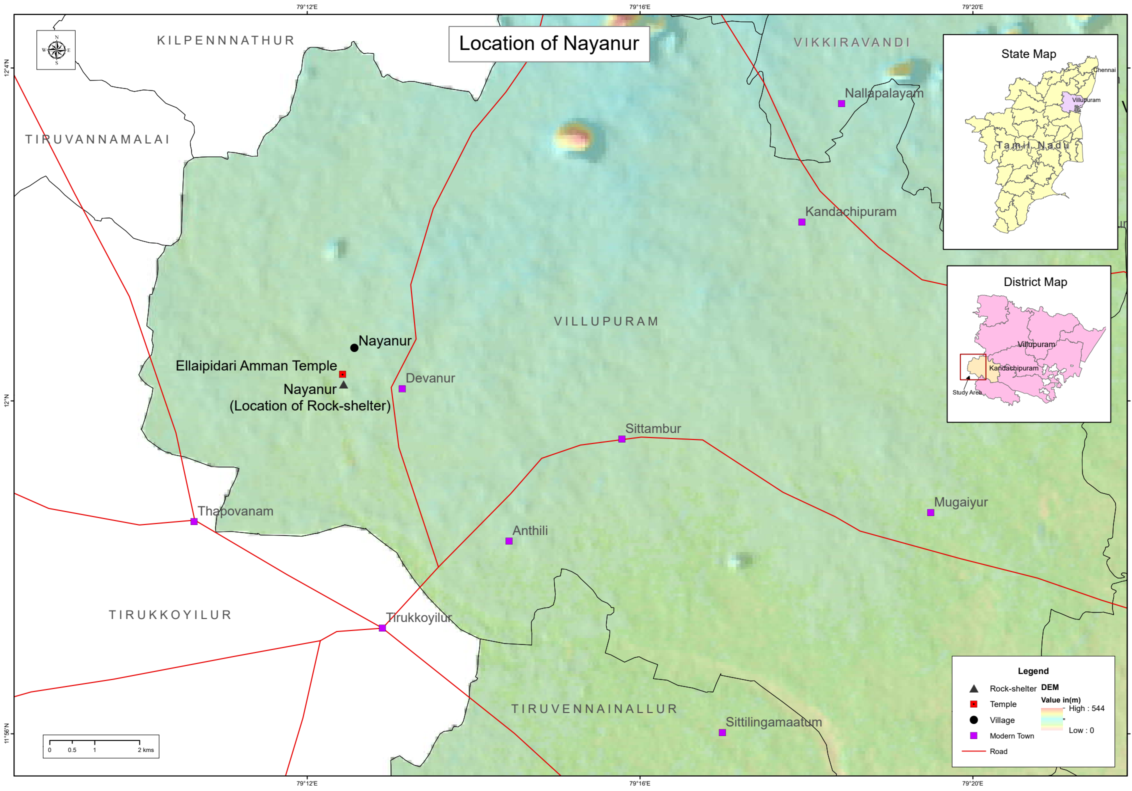
Fig. 4.5.18b Geometrical designs

4.6 Nayanur

Nayanur (12.00332 N; 79.20728 E) lies on the Tirukkovilur – Virapandi road at a distance of 5 km from Tirukkovilur. It lies on the bank of the Turujilar (Turncilur), a tributary of Pennaiyar which flows 3 km south of the village (Maps 4.6.1-4.6.2). The Iron Age megalithic habitation-cum-burial site is found on the eastern side of the village covering an area of more than 100 acres. The occurrence of megalithic cairn circles entombing cist burial with portholes in the east begins from the railway gate and ends in the reserved forest area. Due to the afforestation process, most of the burials are ransacked in order to plant trees. Some of the burials had double circles made of vertical slabs of 1 m height planted around the cist at regular interval to form a fence as one noticed at Mallachandram and Maharajakadai in Krishnagiri district. The habitation mound is found on the northern side of the village.


Location of Nayanur
KILPENNNATHUR
TIRUVANNAMALAI
VIKKIRAVANDI
VILLUPURAM
TIRUKKOYILUR
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Nallapalayam
Kandachipuram
Nayanur
Ellaipidari Amman Temple
Nayanur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Devanur
Sittambur
Thapovanam
Anthili
Mugaiyur
Tirukkoyilur
Sittilingamaatum
Turujilur
Thenpennai River
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Villupuram
District Map
Villupuram
Kandachipuram
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
12°4'N
12°N
11°56'N
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.6.1 Location of Nayanur


Location of Nayanur
KILPENNNATHUR
TIRUVANNAMALAI
VIKKIRAVANDI
VILLUPURAM
TIRUKKOYILUR
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Nallapalayam
Kandachipuram
Nayanur
Ellaipidari Amman Temple
Nayanur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Devanur
Sittambur
Thapovanam
Anthili
Mugaiyur
Tirukkoyilur
Sittilingamaatum
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Villupuram
District Map
Villupuram
Kandachipuram
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Modern Town
Road
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 544
Low : 0
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
12°4'N
12°N
11°56'N
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.6.2 Location of Nayanur

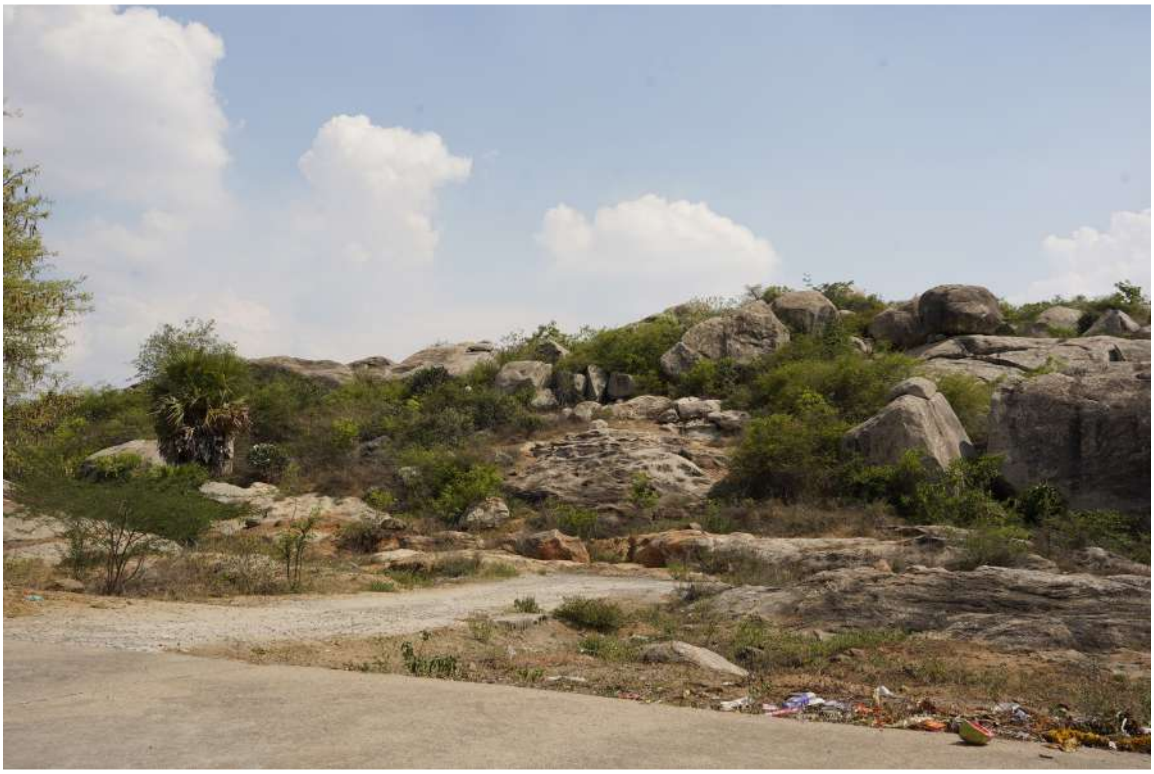


Fig. 4.6.1 General view of Nayanur

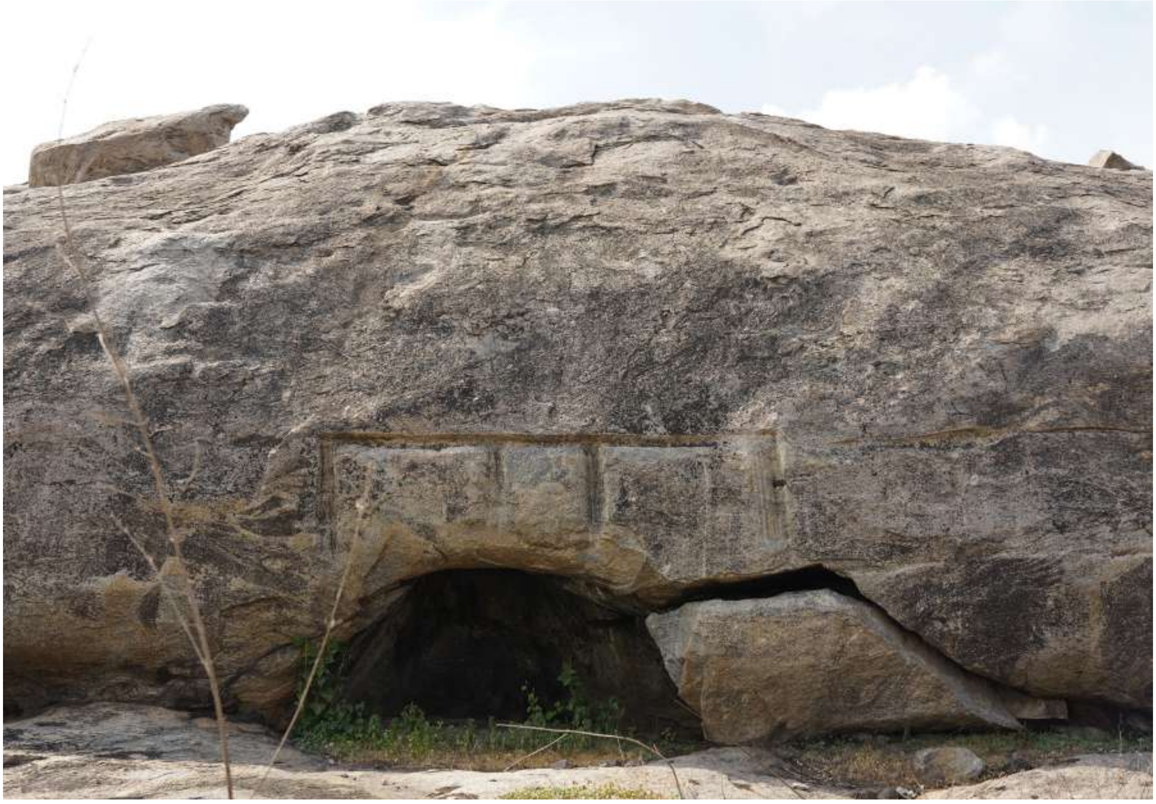


Fig. 4.6.2 General view of shelter

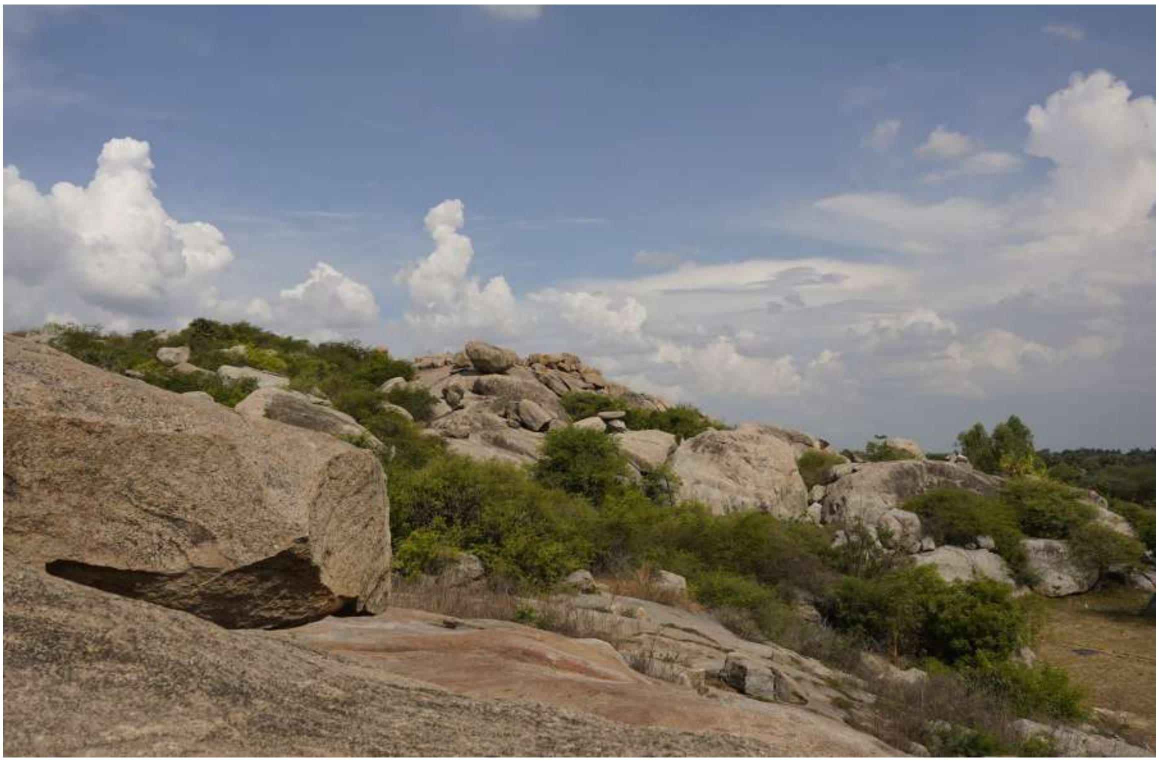


Fig. 4.6.3 General view of Nayanur

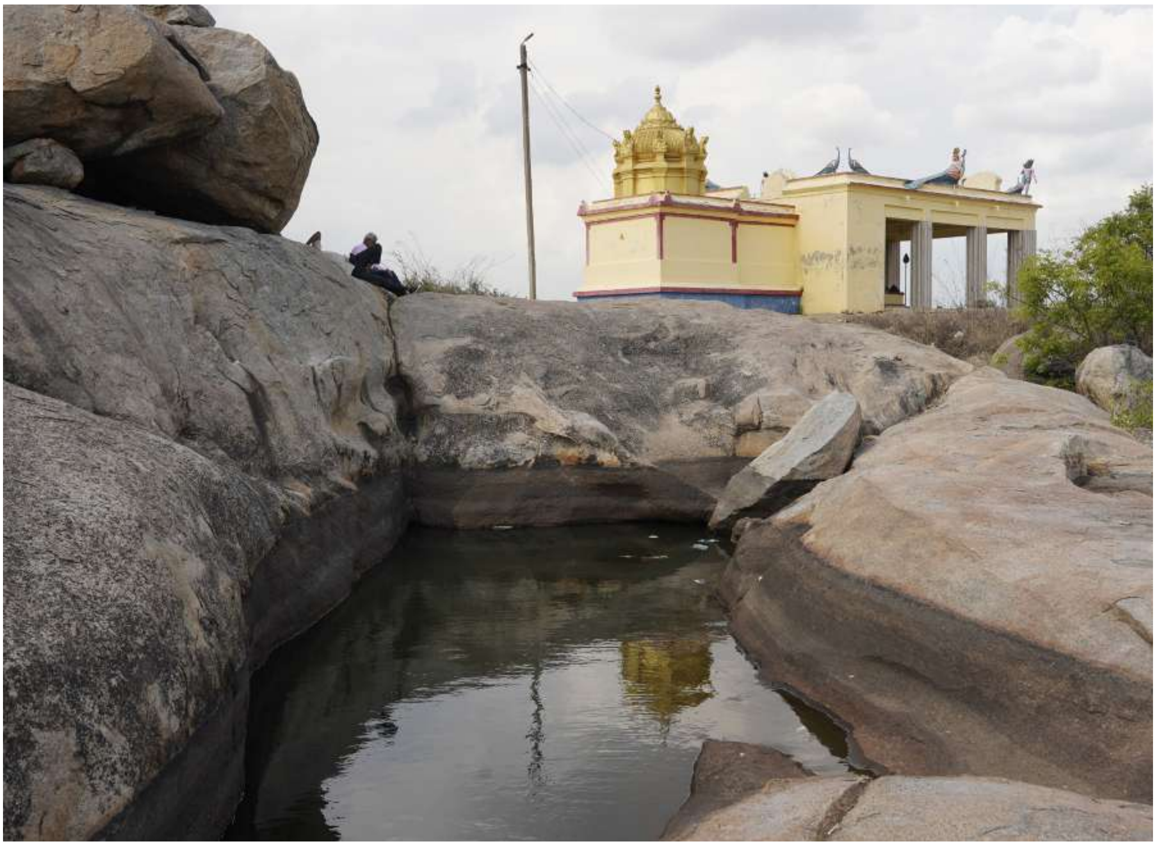


Fig. 4.6.4 Distant view of shelter

The rock shelter is located in a hillock close to the Ellai Pidari Amman Koil. Rock paintings executed in red depict cattle. The rock shelter is located on the western side of the village (Figs. 4.6.1-4.6.4).

An unfinished rock-cut cave is noticed further west of the shelter on the southern side of the Muruga temple and close to the perennial pond. The villages Nayanur, Devanur, Andali and Adichchanur are part of the ancient Tirukkovilur, the capital of the Sangam Age Malaiyaman.

Rock Shelter

The total length of the rock shelter is about 6 m and the total height of the inclined surface of the rock shelter is 4 m. The painted area is about 1.5 m wide and 1m in height. The documentation was carried out from west to east in grids

Description

The southern side of the village is surrounded by a series of hillocks. One of the north-facing rock boulders has a few drawings in red colour. A life-size wild goat / *varaiyaadu* is depicted in outline, in a naturalistic style. The artist was familiar with the anatomical details of animals. Besides the goat image, a head of a goat image is depicted in frontal view.

The selection of the painting area is unique. Normally, these kinds of paintings are executed either in caves or shelters, but the artist selected a rock bed surface as canvas. This kind of terrain is suitable for goats to live. This painting seems older than megalithic period, because of its style and execution.

Panel Description

In Nayanur, a few paintings are found in a rock shelter situated on the western side of the village. Rock paintings are in red colour and paintings are not found in clusters;

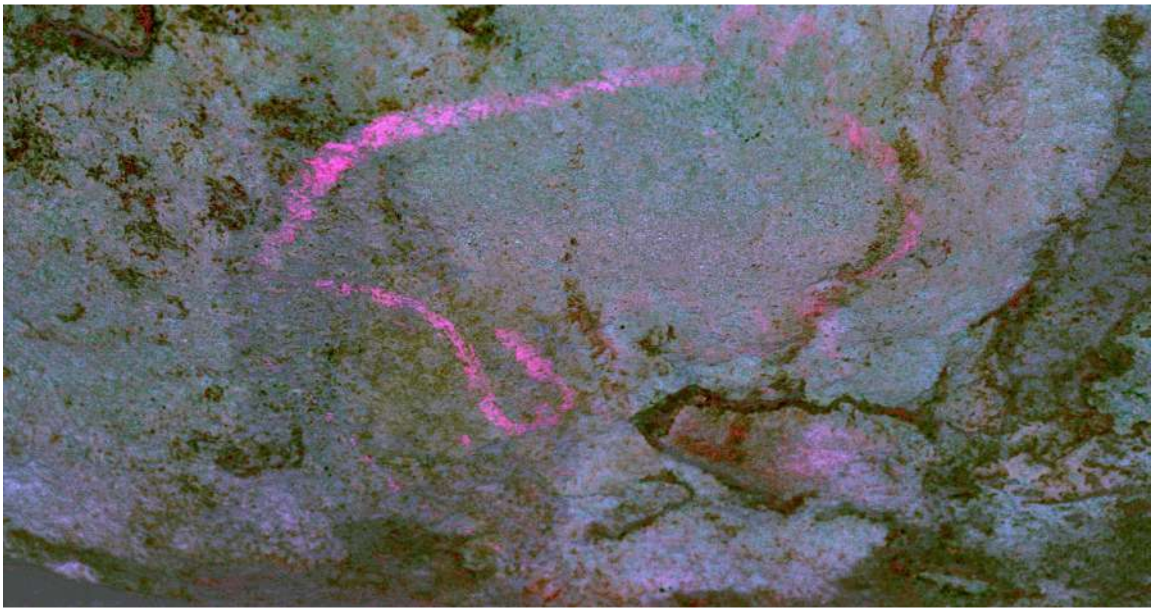


Fig. 4.6.5a Animals

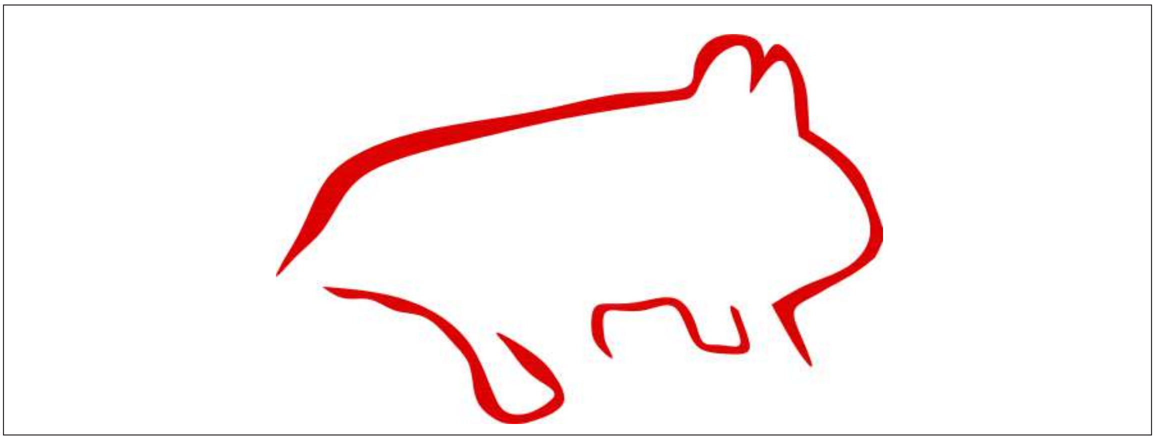


Fig. 4.6.5b Animals

all are faded in condition. In the first place, two birds are painted, in which one bird has long beak and it is not clearly visible. A cattle figure is drawn on the side of the rock surface.

Two animals are depicted in red (Figs. 4.6.5a-4.6.5b). At the top where a big face with horns is visible to the naked eye. It possibly represents a cow. The animal at the bottom, is similar to a pig.

An animal is depicted with red ochre. The animal represented here looks like a pig. Face and the bottom portion are faded (Figs. 4.6.6a-4.6.6b).

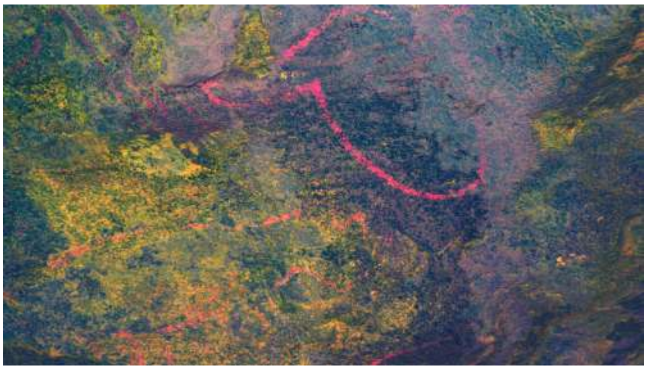


Fig. 4.6.6a Animal

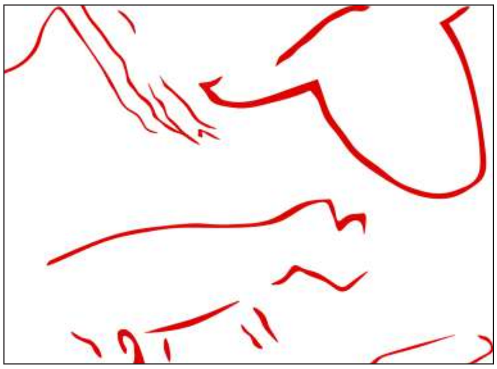


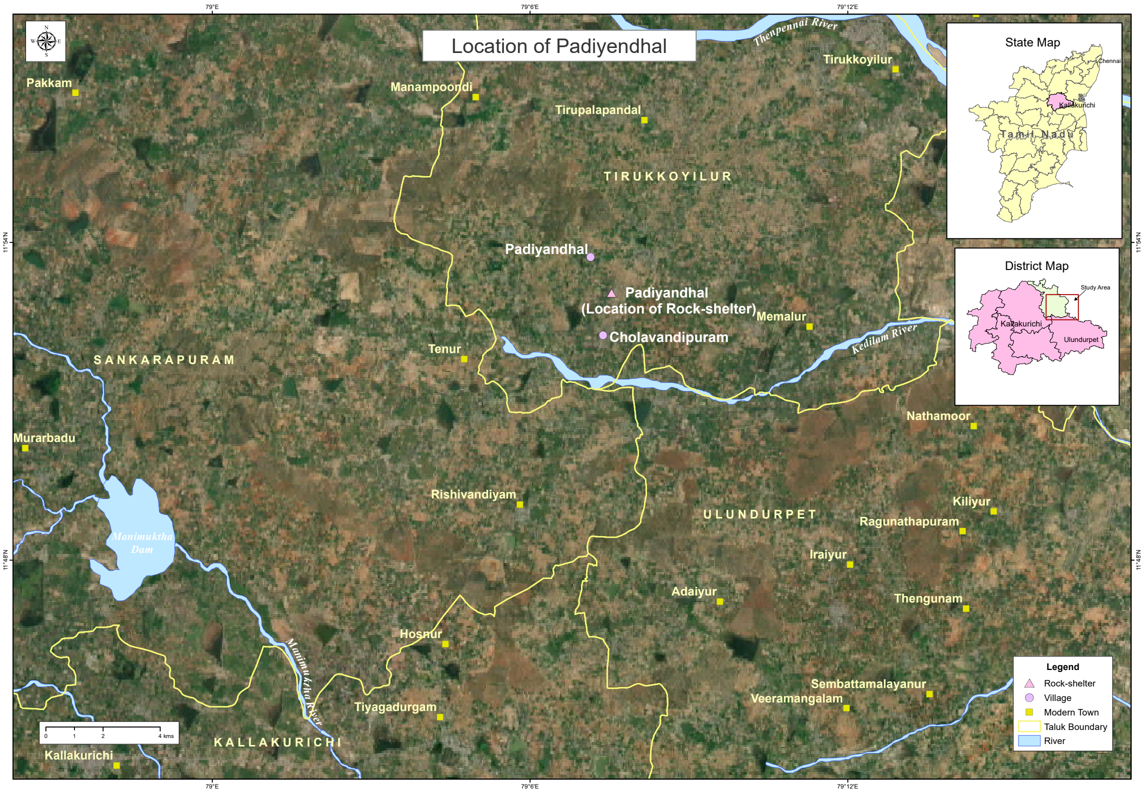
Fig. 4.6.6b Animal

4.7 Padiyenthal

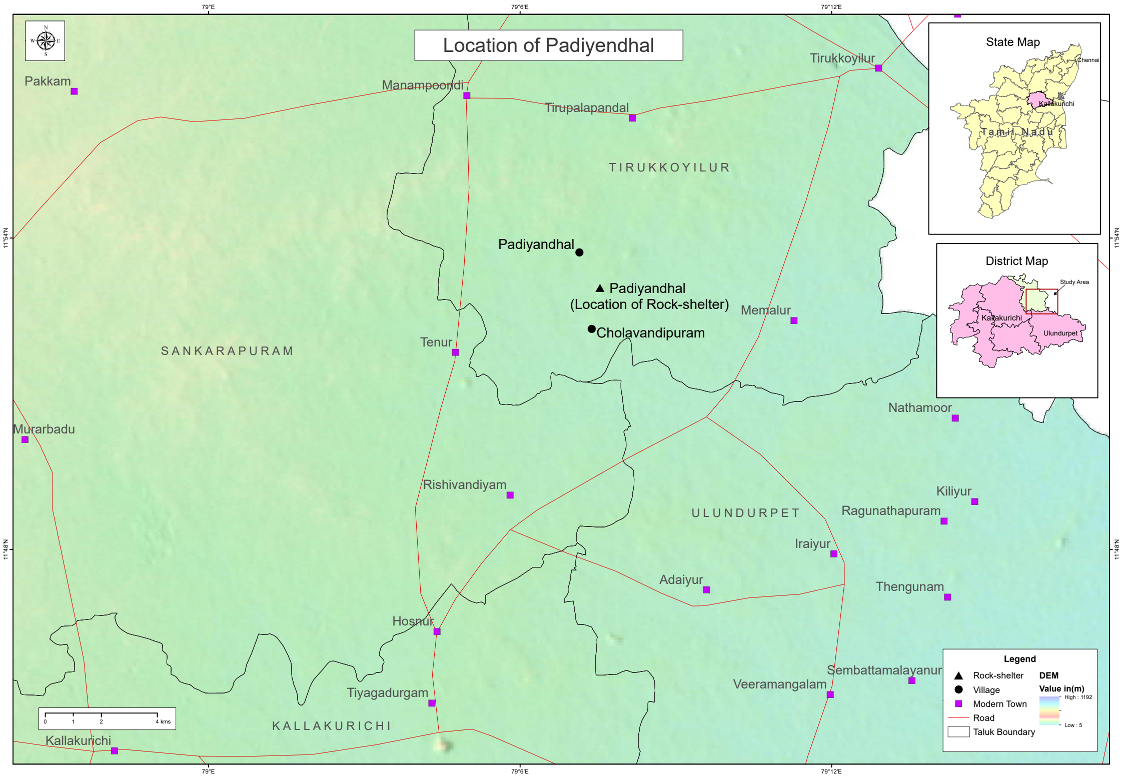
Padiyenthal (11.88401 N; 79.12565 E) is located south of river Thenpennai near the village (Maps 4.7.1-4.7.2) Cholavandiyapuram in Tirukovilur taluk of Kallakurichi district. This village has both pre-historic and early historic cultural vestiges. The rock art is found on the roof of the hill in a small cave located behind the Aandimalai locally known as *Irulan-kal.*

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 6 m and the total length of the rock


Location of Padiyendhal
79°E
79°6'E
79°12'E
11°54'N
11°48'N
Thenpennai River
Pakkam
Manampoondi
Tirupalapandal
Tirukkoyilur
TIRUKKOYILUR
Padiyandhal
Padiyandhal
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Memalur
Cholavandipuram
Tenur
Kedilam River
SANKARAPURAM
Murarbadu
Nathamoor
Rishivandiyam
ULUNDURPET
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Manimuktha Dam
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
Manimuktha River
Sembattamalayanur
Veeramangalam
Tiyagadurgam
KALLAKURICHI
Kallakurichi
0 1 2 4 kms
State Map
Chennai
Kallakurichi
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Kallakurichi
Ulundurpet
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.7.1 Location map of Padiyenthal


Location of Padiyendhal
79°E
79°6'E
79°12'E
11°54'N
11°48'N
Pakkam
Manampoondi
Tirupalapandal
Tirukkoyilur
TIRUKKOYILUR
Padiyandhal
Padiyandhal
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Memalur
Cholavandipuram
Tenur
SANKARAPURAM
Murarbadu
Nathamoor
Rishivandiyam
ULUNDURPET
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
Sembattamalayanur
Veeramangalam
Tiyagadurgam
KALLAKURICHI
Kallakurichi
0 1 2 4 kms
State Map
Chennai
Kallakurichi
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Kallakurichi
Ulundurpet
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1192
Low : 5

Map 4.7.2 Location map of Padiyenthal

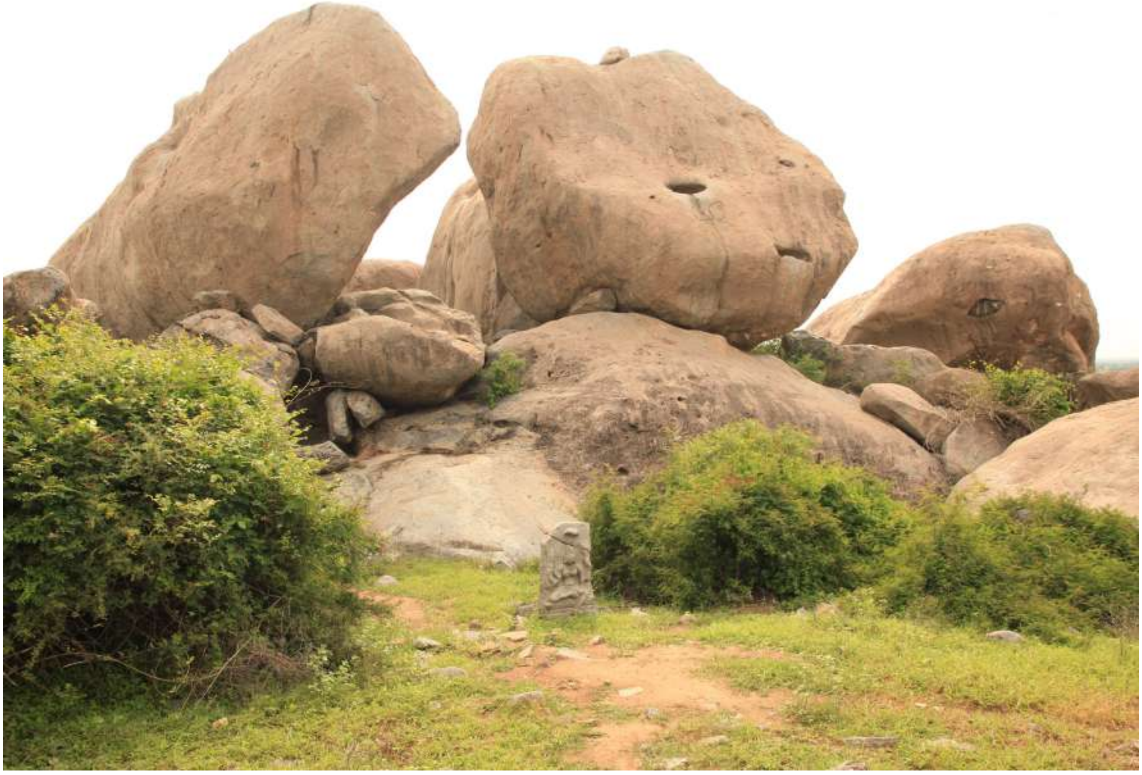


Fig. 4.7.1 Location of Padiyenthal

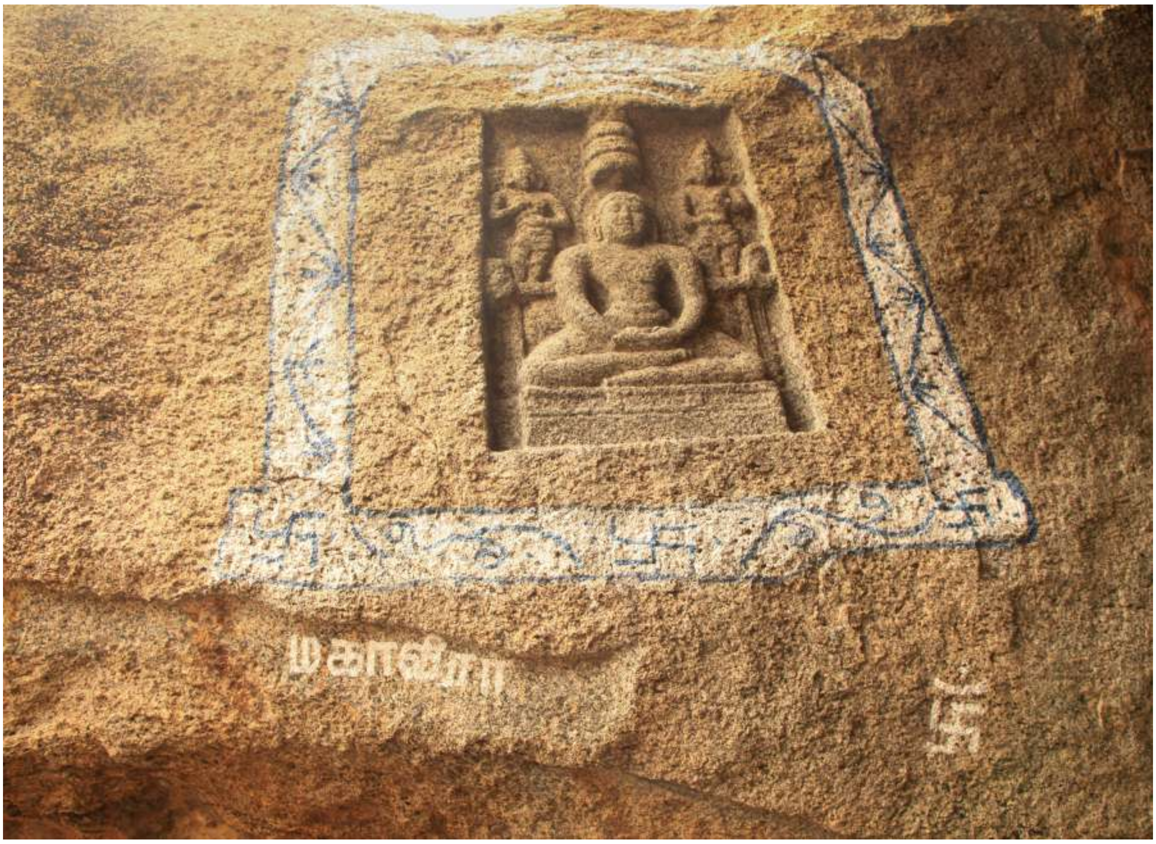


Fig. 4.7.2 Jain Tirthangara, Aandimalai

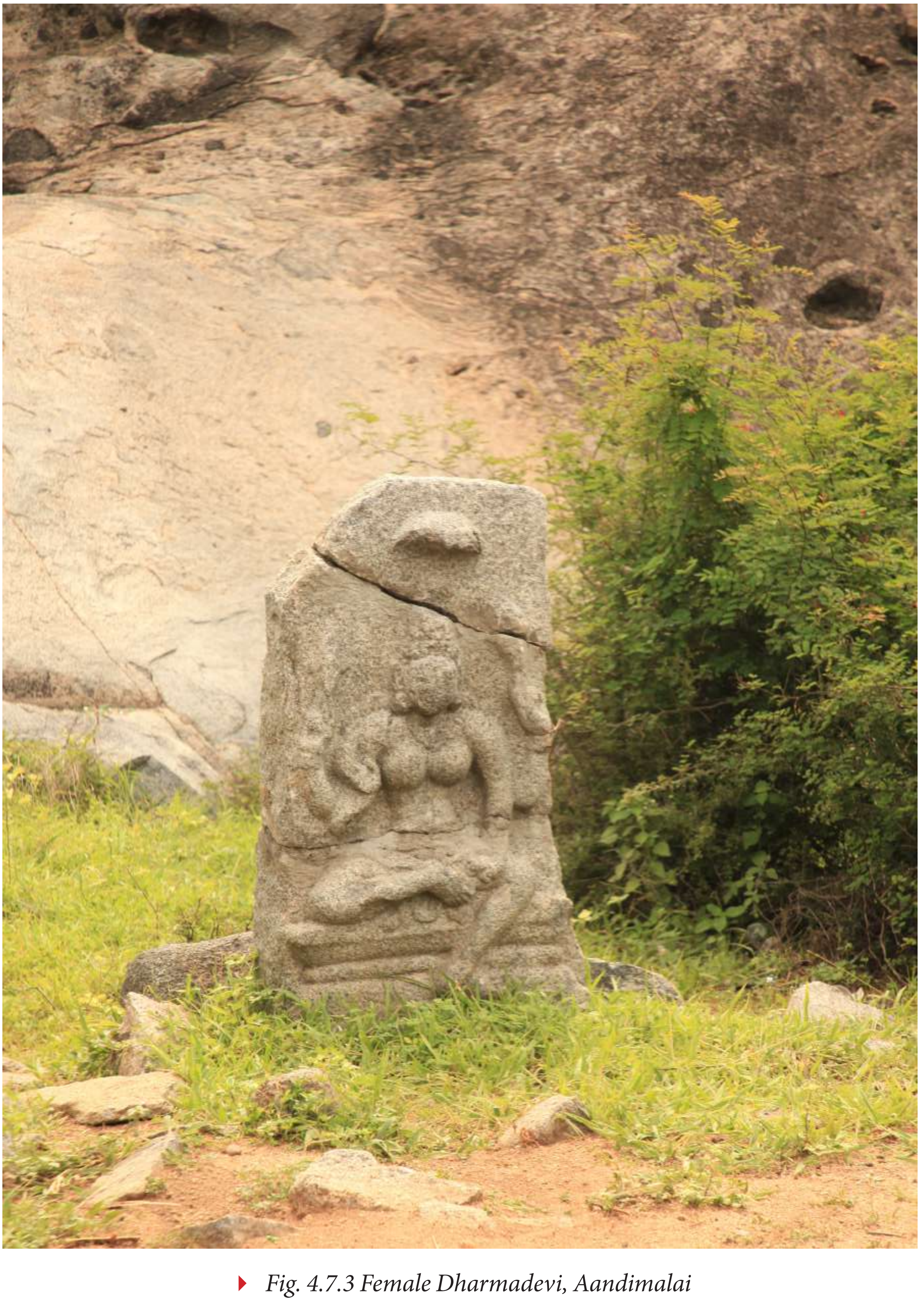


Fig. 4.7.3 Female Dharmadevi, Aandimalai

shelter is about 6.5m and the total height of the inclined surface is 6.5 m (Fig. 4.7.1). The vertical face of the shelter is about 5 m. The total painted surface is about 5.5 m. The documentation was carried out from west to east in grids. Near the shelter, Jain Tirthangar and Dharmadevi sculptures are found (Figs. 4.7.2-4.7.3).

Description

Prehistoric rock paintings are found in one of the rock shelters called *Irular-kal,* on the outskirts of the village. This rock is about 8-10 feet high. Its shade is ideal for accommodating more than ten people. Few paintings are visible, that includes horse, man, animal and some unidentified drawings in white and red colours are found. Each painting is executed differently.

Panel Description

The figure of a horse is drawn in a linear pattern and then the body part is filled with white colour. The body structure of the horse is neatly formed. The painting is in a half-faded state, i.e., unrecognizable. A human figure and a dog-like figure are drawn. The human figure is seen with his arms outstretched. The figure of the animal is shown walking laterally. Drawn as a linear pattern and then coloured (Figs. 4.7.4a-4.7.4b).

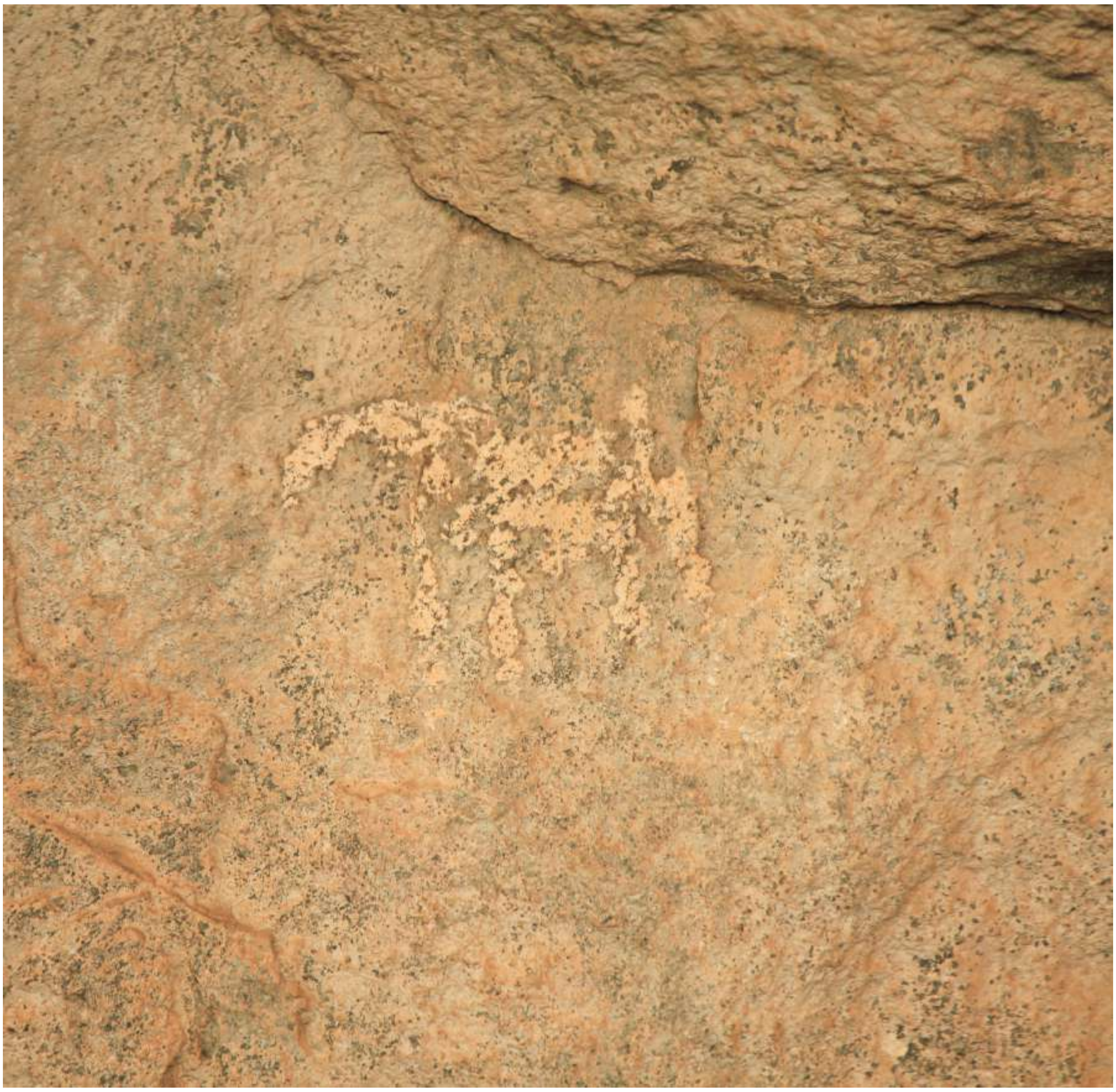


Fig. 4.7.4a Animal

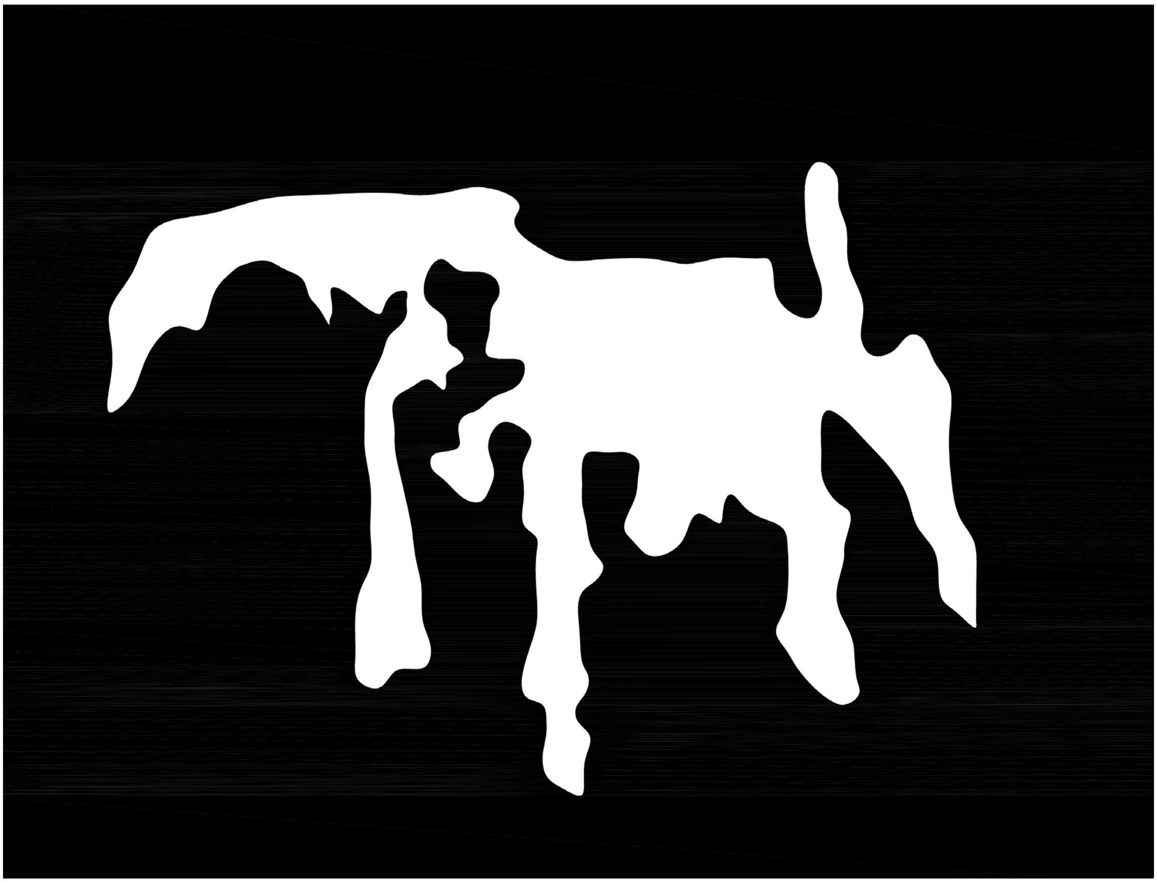


Fig. 4.7.4b Animal

This painting depicts a human figure and an animal/dog-like figure drawn next to it. The human figure is seen with his arms outstretched The physical structure of this animal figure painted is in a dynamic movement. Painting in drawn in a linear pattern and filled with white paint (Figs. 4.7.5a-4.7.5b).

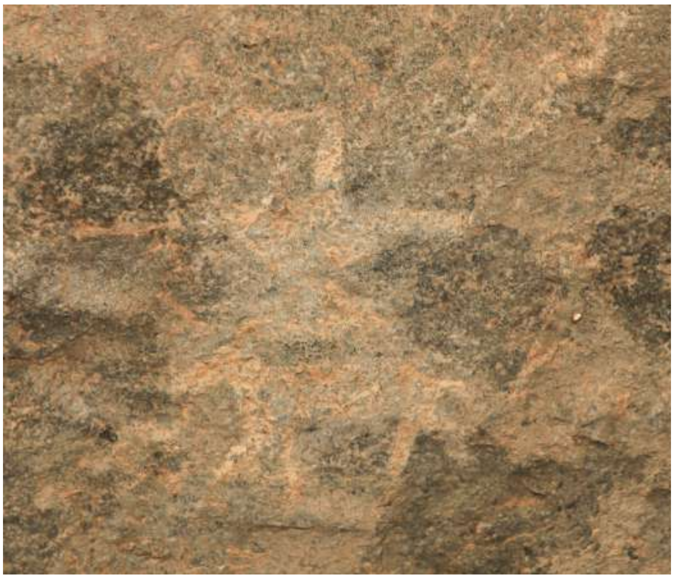


Fig. 4.7.5a Human figure with an animal

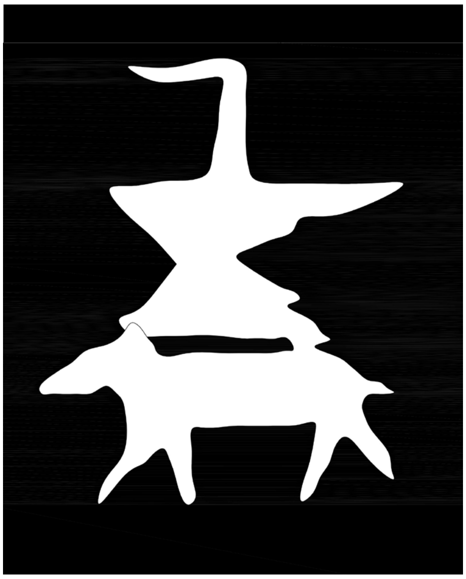


Fig. 4.7.5b Human figure with an animal

This panel has three drawings represented geometrically. The lines are single and double. The sizes are small and the large lines are drawn straight and curved. Three consecutive lines are drawn side by side in a block on the left. On one side of it goes two parallel lines. It has two semi-circular lines; it shows some double parallel lines. These seem to be interrelated. Its overall view looks like a weapon or decorative motif. The right-side painting has multiple lines in all directions in square and rectangular integrated designs (Figs. 4.7.6a-4.7.6b).

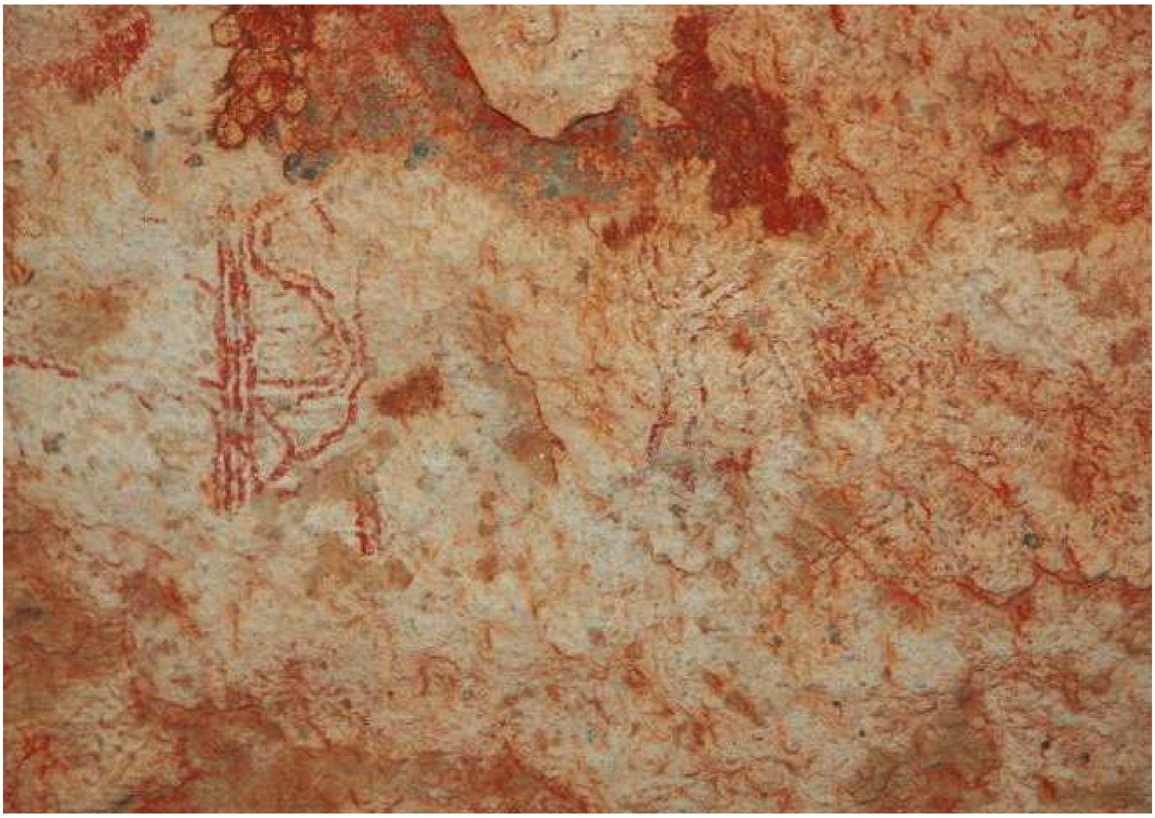


Fig. 4.7.6a Human figure with an animal

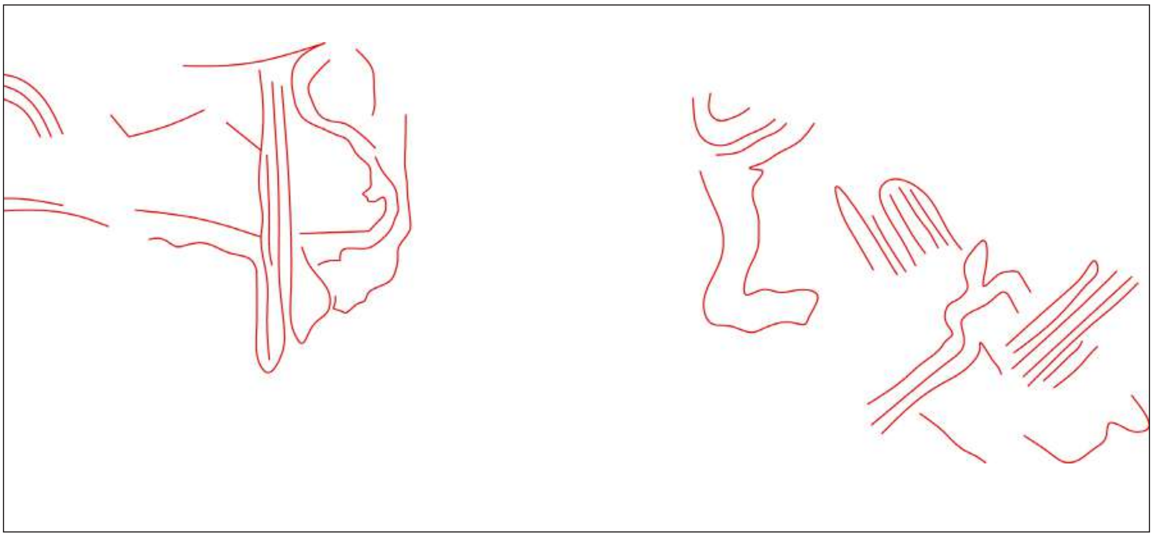


Fig. 4.7.6b Human figure with an animal

An animal figure is found. Its head and tail are not clear. The body part is seen in a linear pattern in red colour. The inner part of the body is painted with white and red dots interspersed. It is natural to draw dots like this when one is showing animals like a leopard and a spotted deer. In these paintings, two legs with three fingers are depicted in a linear pattern in red colour. A series of small circles is shown next to it (Figs. 4.7.7a-4.7.7b).

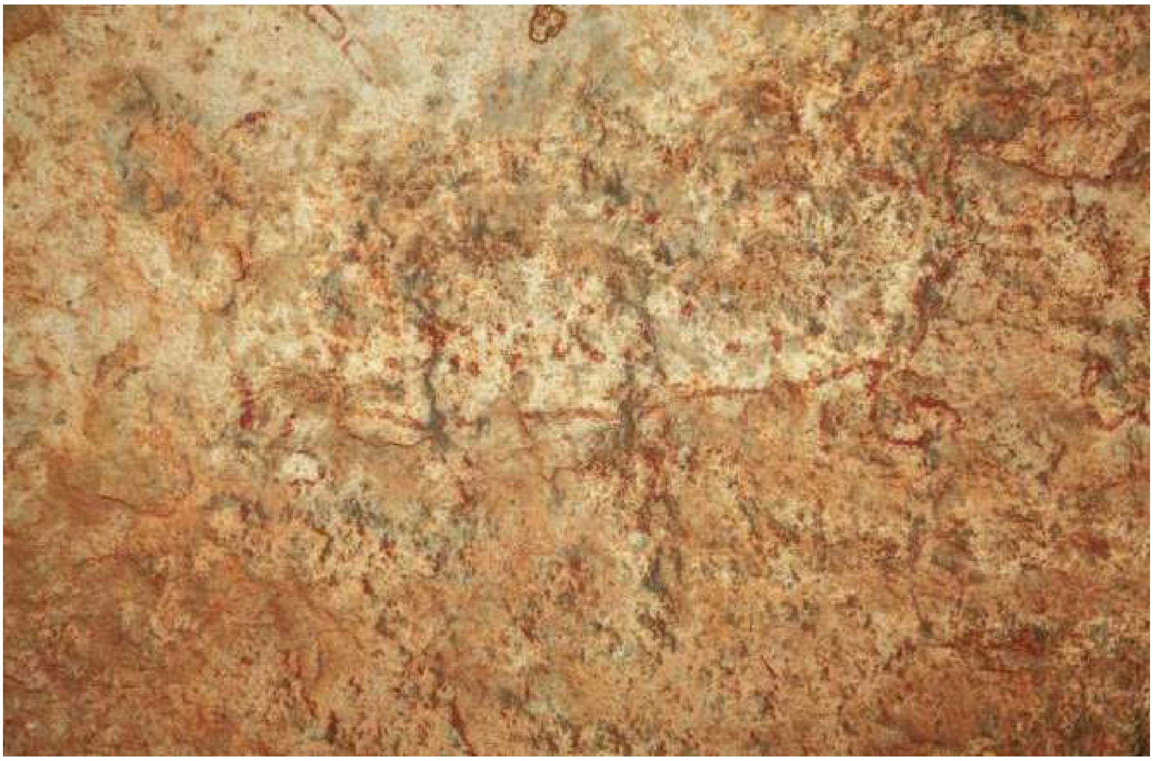


Fig. 4.7.7a Deer

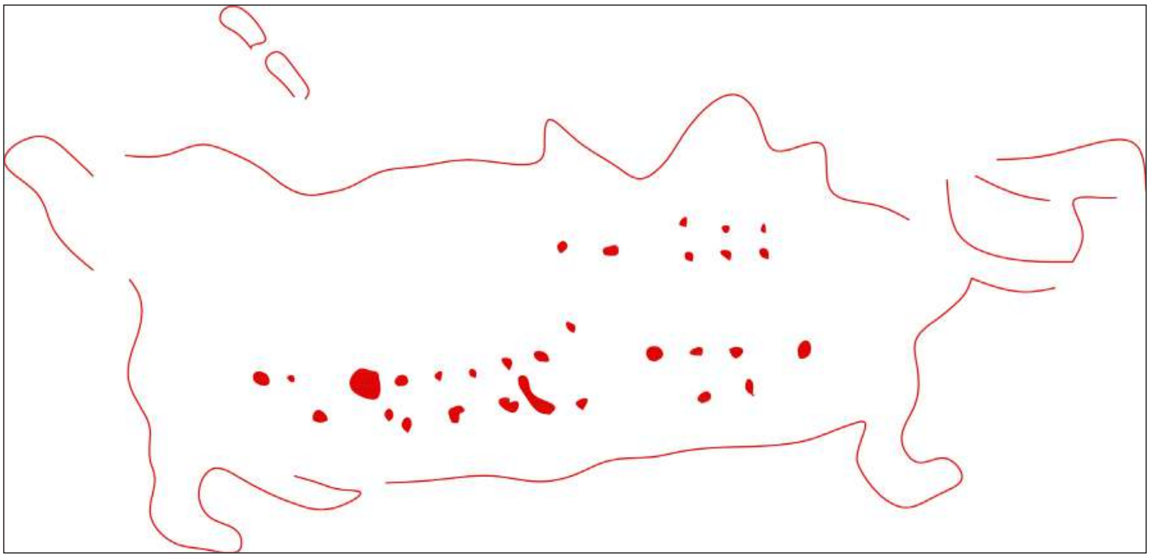


Fig. 4.7.7b Deer

In this panel, there are some motifs and geometric designs. Two long and big-sized legs, with three fingers, probably a lizard is depicted in linear pattern in red colour. A series of small circles forming a chain of rings is faded out (Figs. 4.7.8a-4.7.8b).

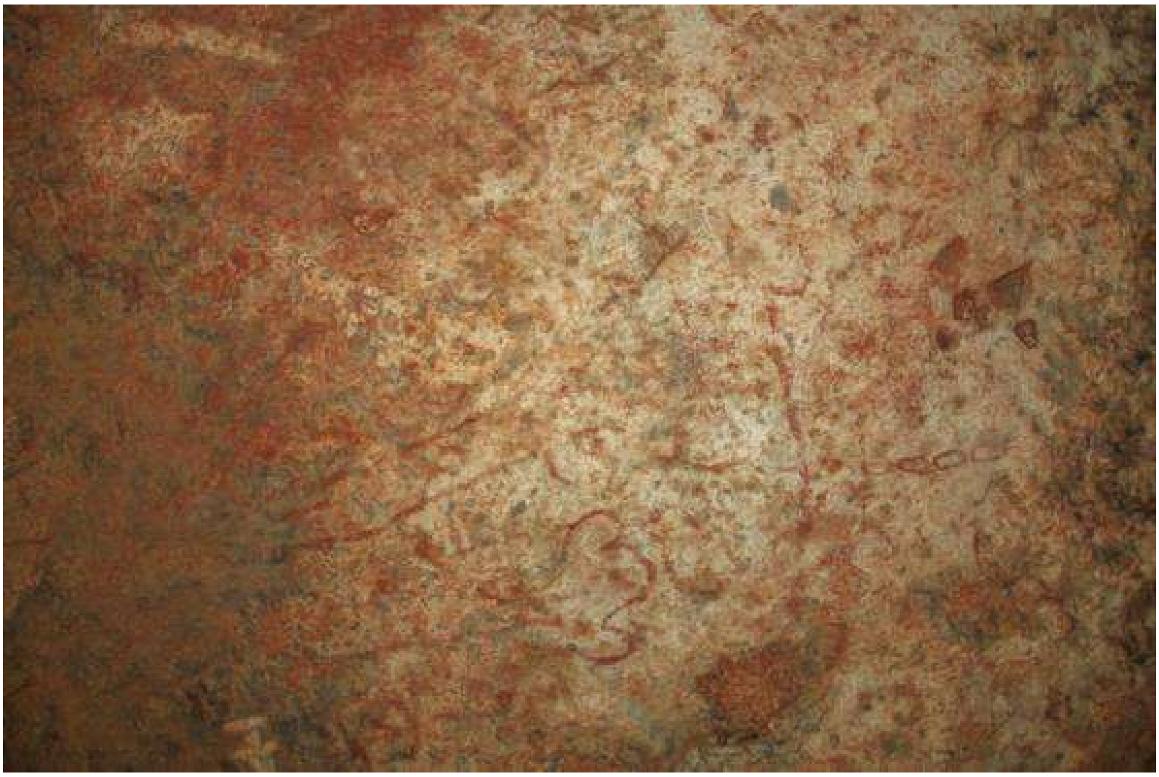


Fig. 4.7.8a Lizard and a chain

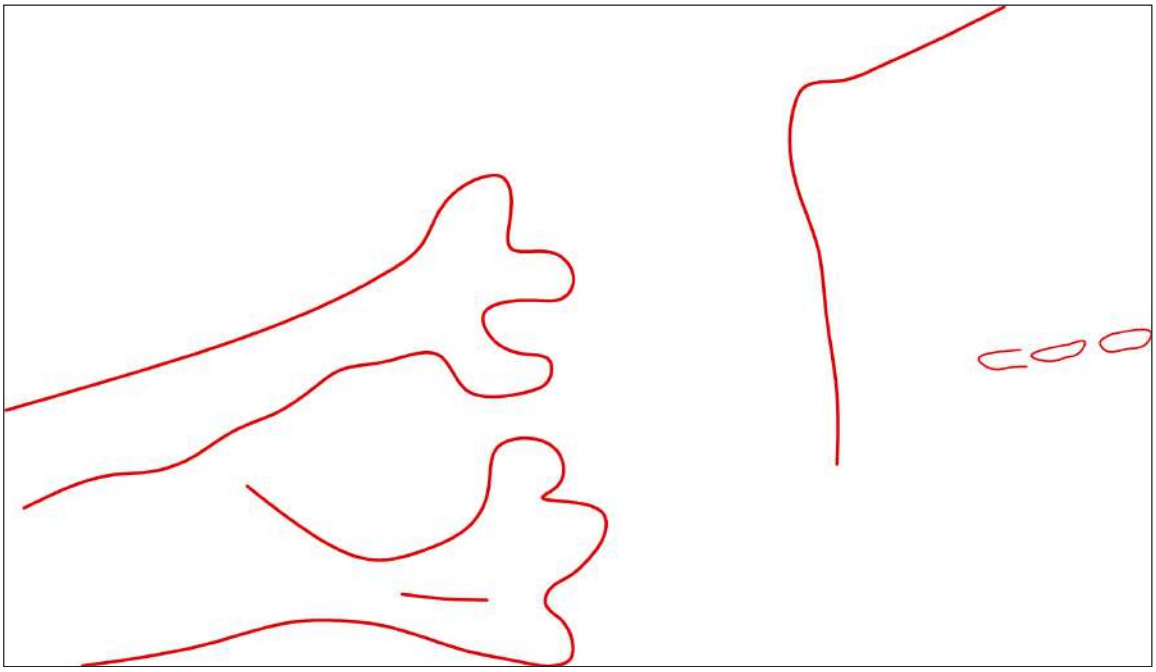


Fig. 4.7.8b Lizard and a chain

This collection of paintings shows different shapes and designs. A series of lines, small grids and small elliptical circles are drawn in red colour. Possibly an animal leg is visible in this frame, next to it are integrated lines for decorative purposes (Figs. 4.7.9a-4.7.9b).

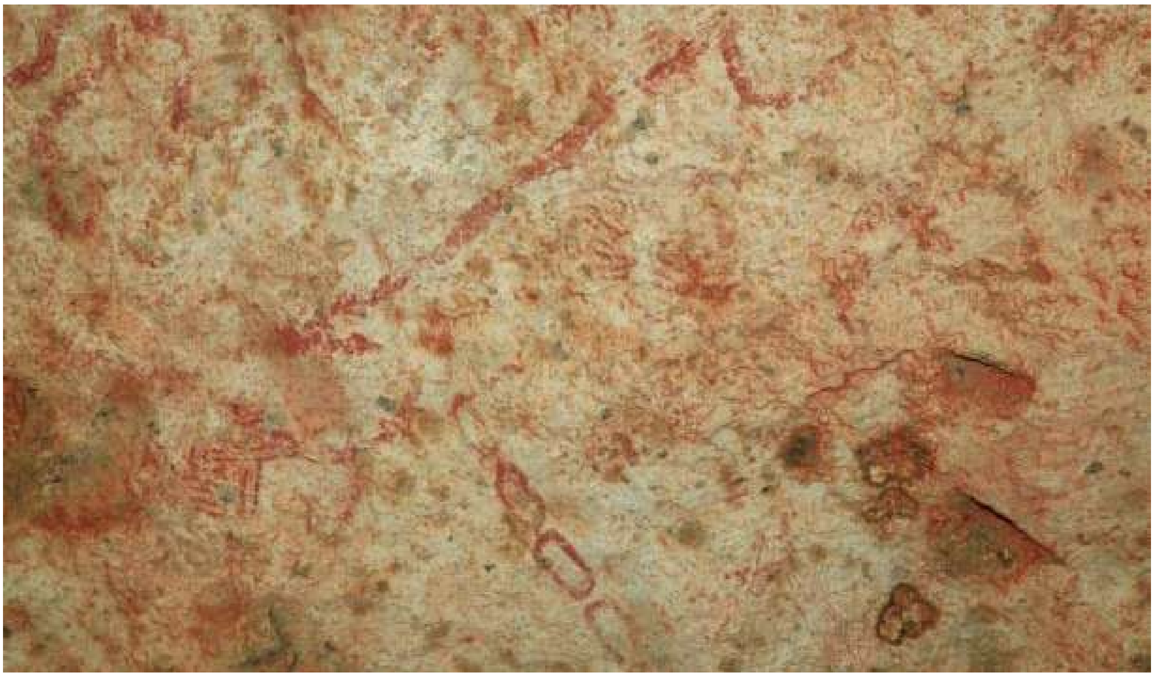


Fig. 4.7.9a Geometric designs

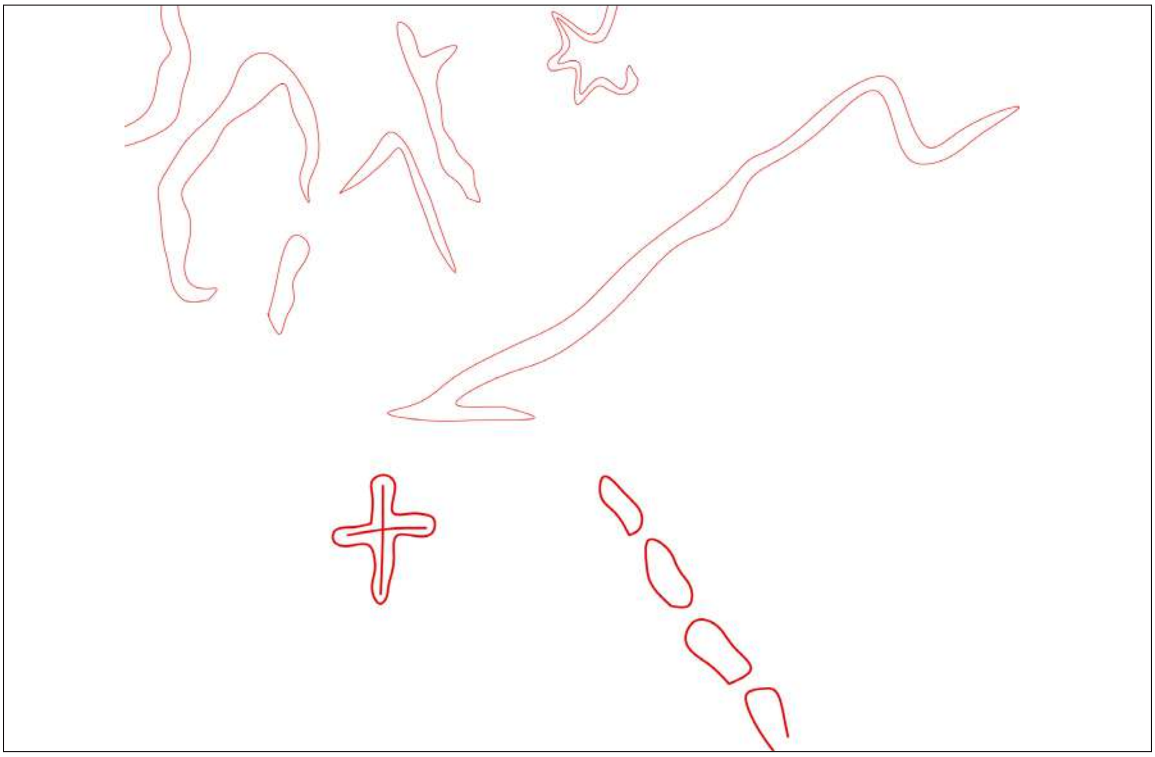


Fig. 4.7.9b Geometric designs

In this frame, two-weapons, probably a sword having flat base, pointed ends and handle are depicted. The sword on the left is smaller in size whereas the one on the right is larger in size. This sword is outlined and the inner is filled with white pigment (Figs. 4.7.10a-4.7.10b).

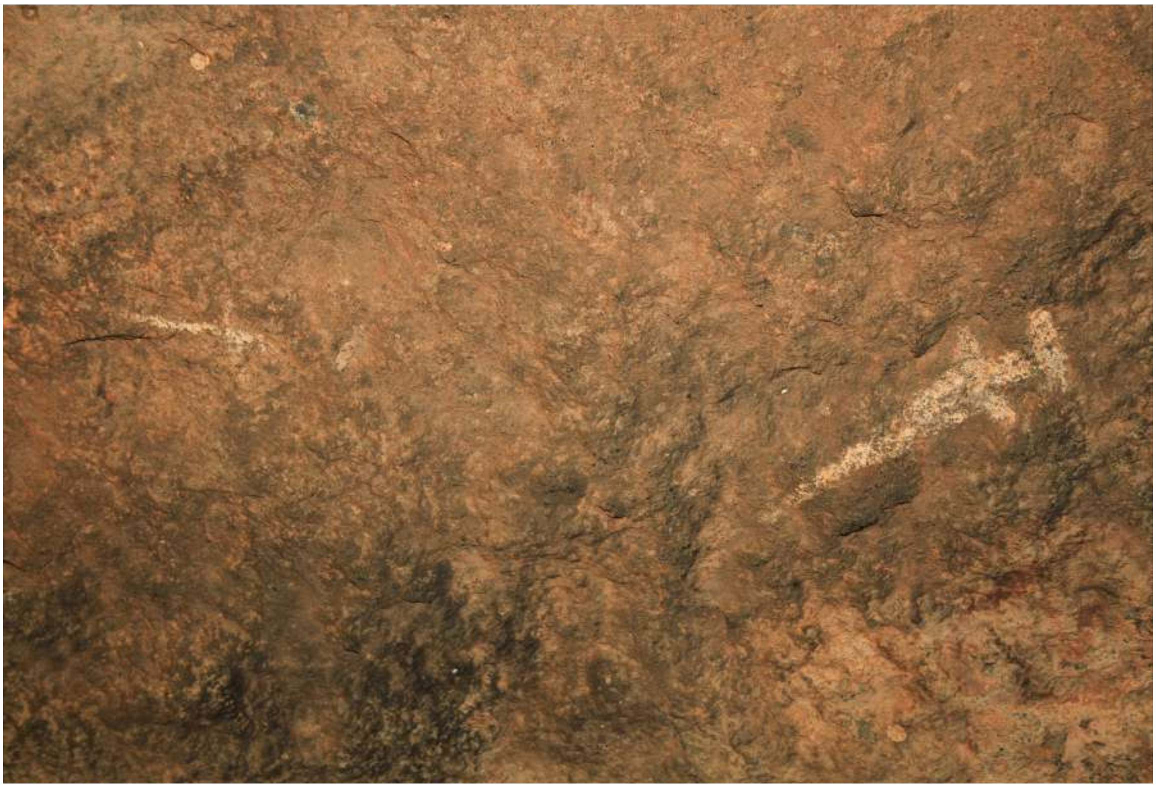


Fig. 4.7.10a Sword

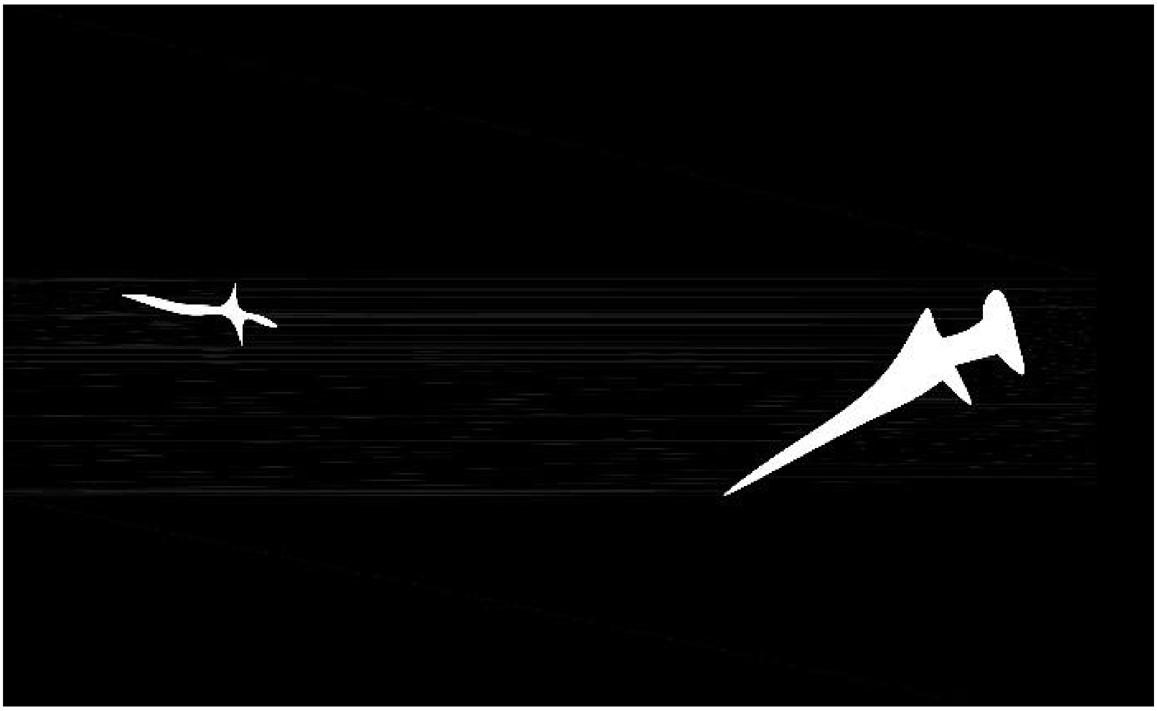


Fig. 4.7.10b Sword

This panel shows a symbol of five figures painted in different shapes in white colour. These may also represent graffiti. Some drawings are identical to the graffiti at the bottom. One looks like a number 2. Next three symbols look like number 8 in shape. The final figure is in the shape of a inverted trident. All these were painted in white colour (Figs. 4.7.11a-4.7.11b).

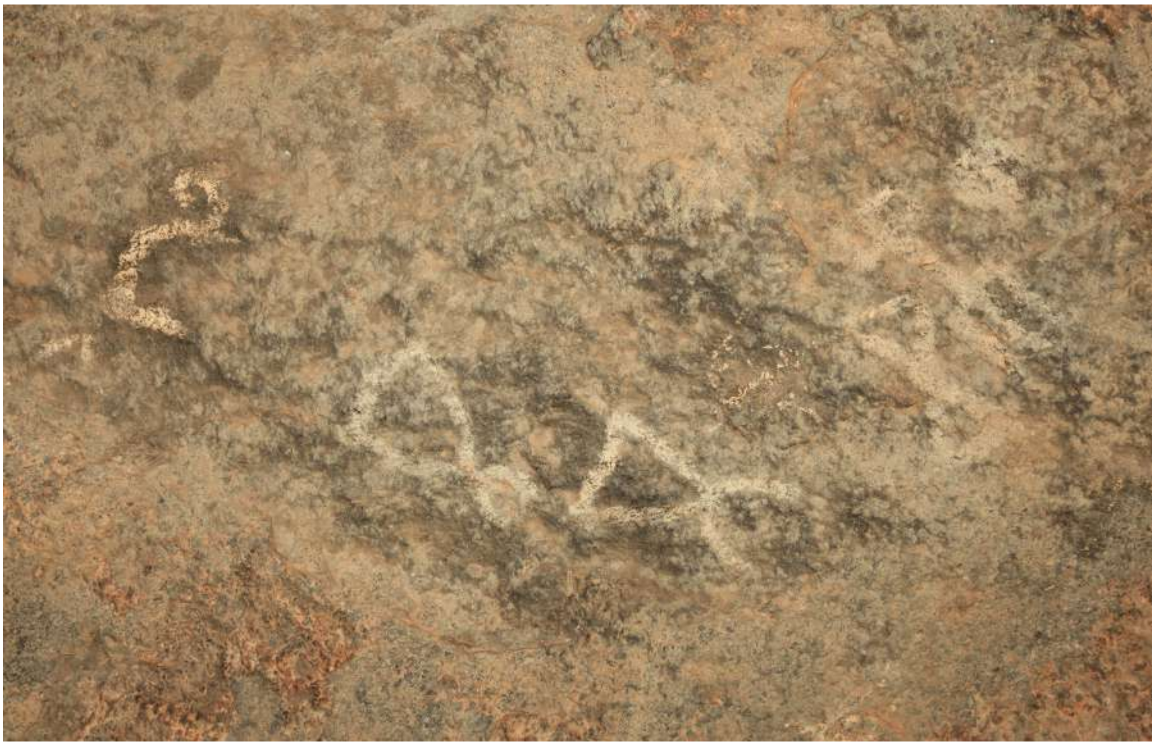


Fig. 4.7.11a Graffiti

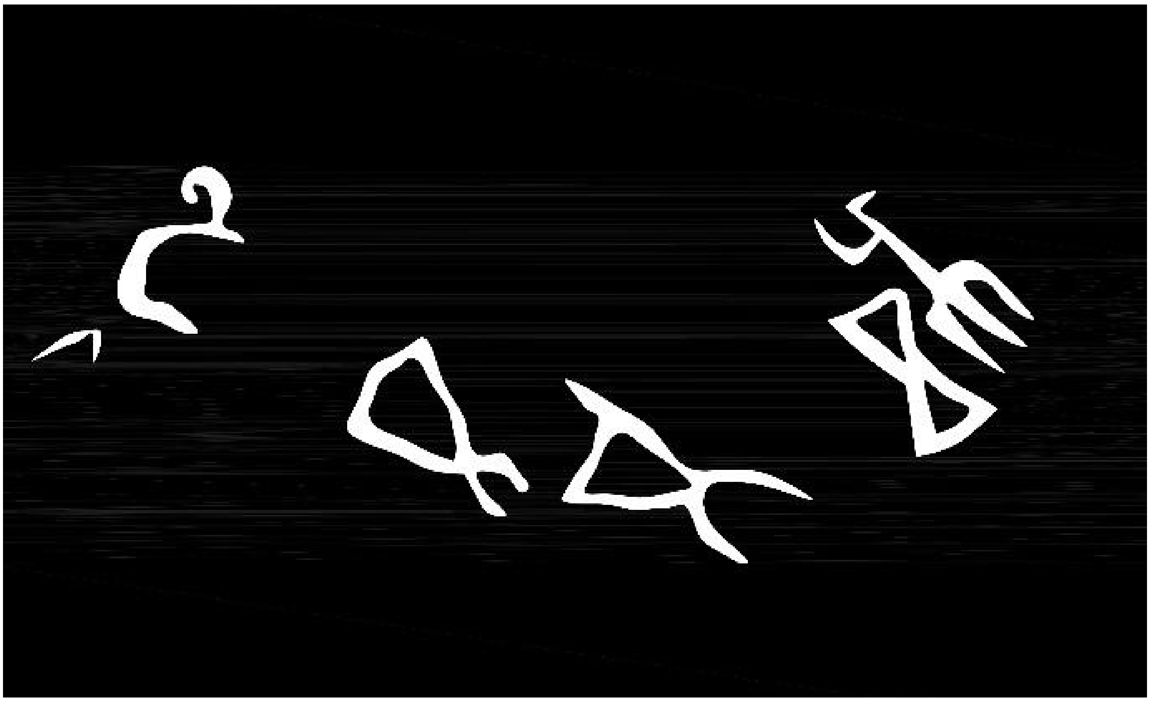


Fig. 4.7.11b Graffiti

This figure is depicted in white on the left side of the above symbols. The square grid is divided into four parts and a graffiti-like drawing is shown at its tip. Such graffiti are found in some parts of rock paintings (Figs. 4.7.12a-4.7.12b).

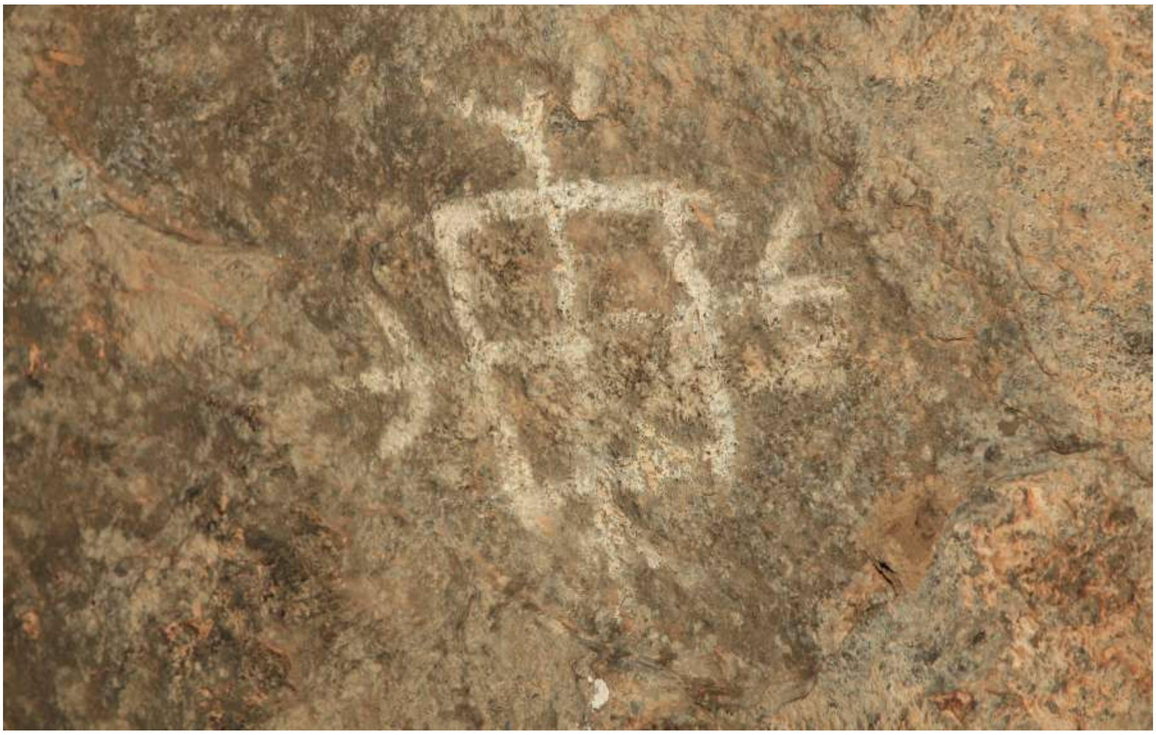


Fig. 4.7.12a Geometric design

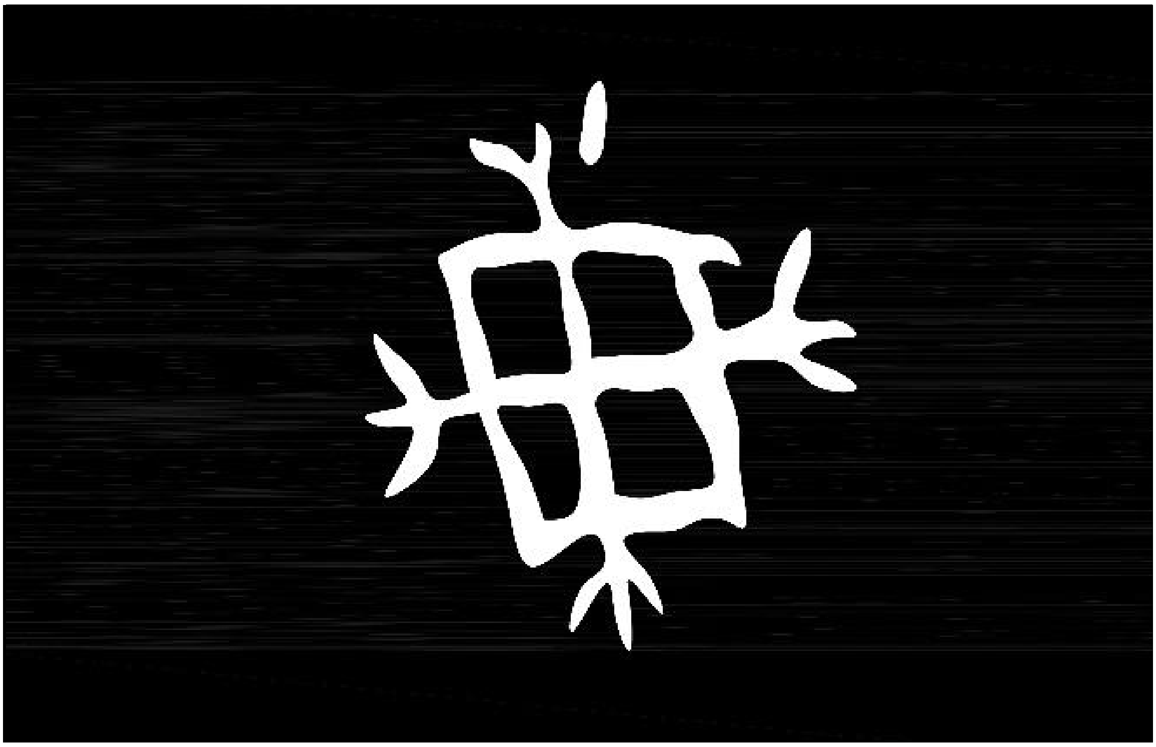


Fig. 4.7.12b Geometric design

This figure has a curved line which could be a snake. This figure is drawn with white colour. Next to it looks like a star painted in red and white colour, but these are in faded condition (Figs. 4.7.13a-4.7.13b).

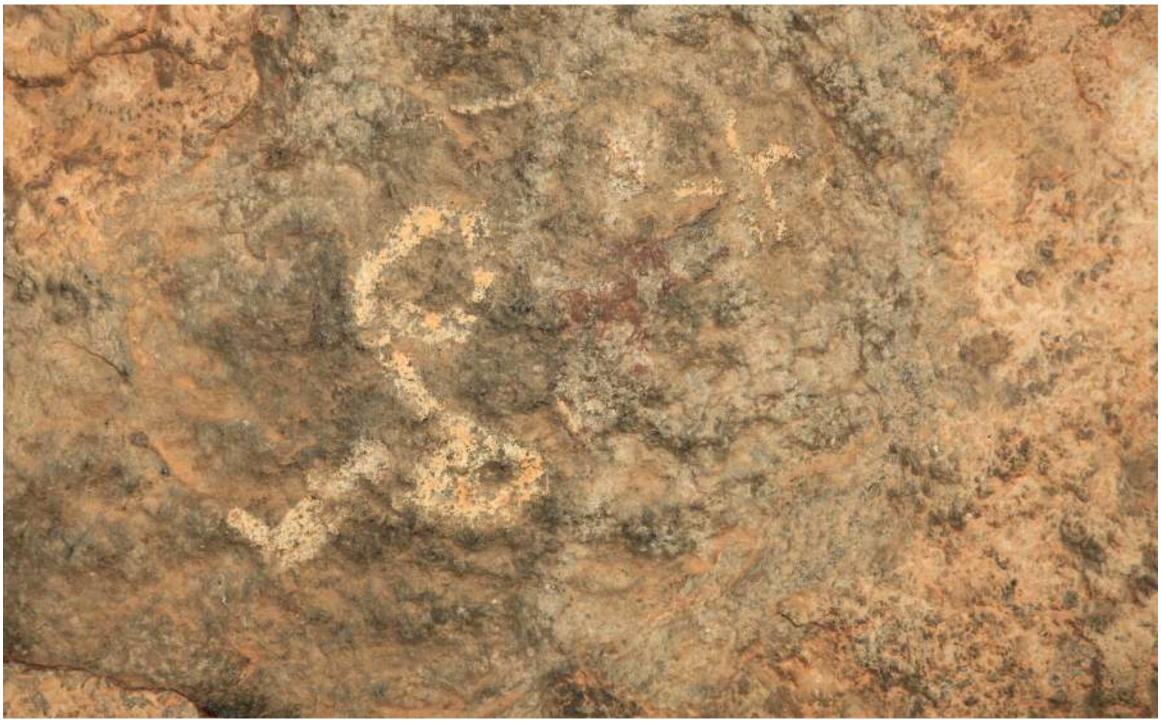


Fig. 4.7.13a Snake?

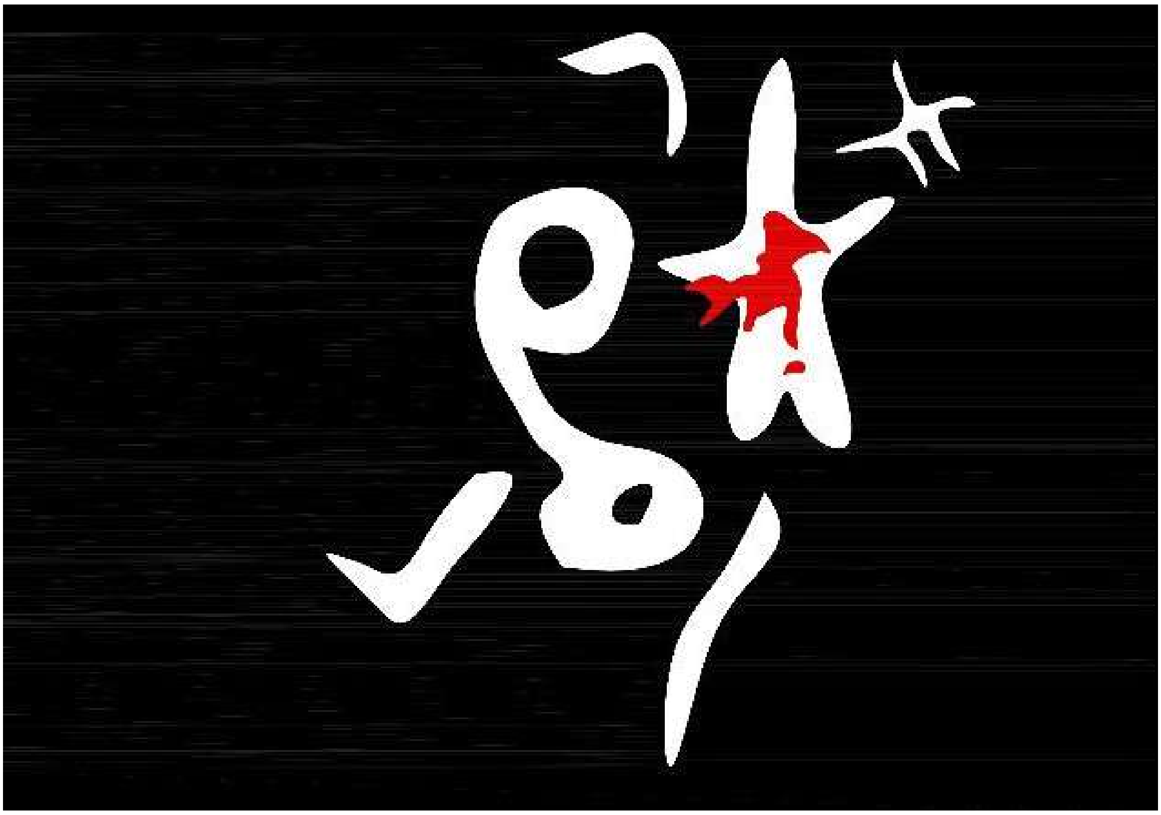


Fig. 4.7.13b Snake?

In this panel, the paintings are not clear and it is visible with a few paintings like animal/human. Only a small area is clear and the rest of them are faded and it can not be identified (Figs. 4.7.14a-4.7.14b).

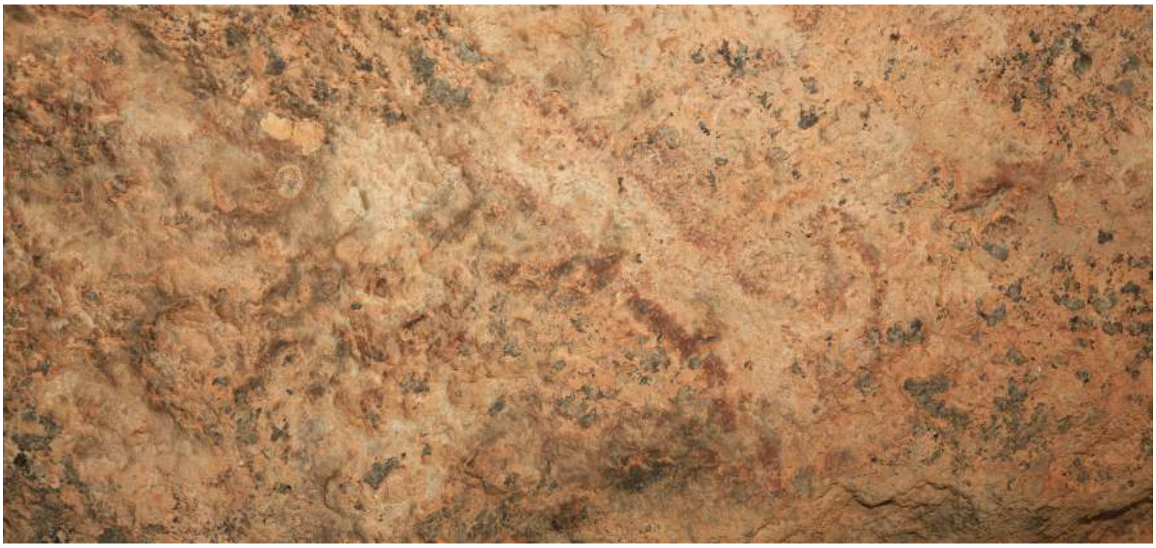


Fig. 4.7.14a Unidentified

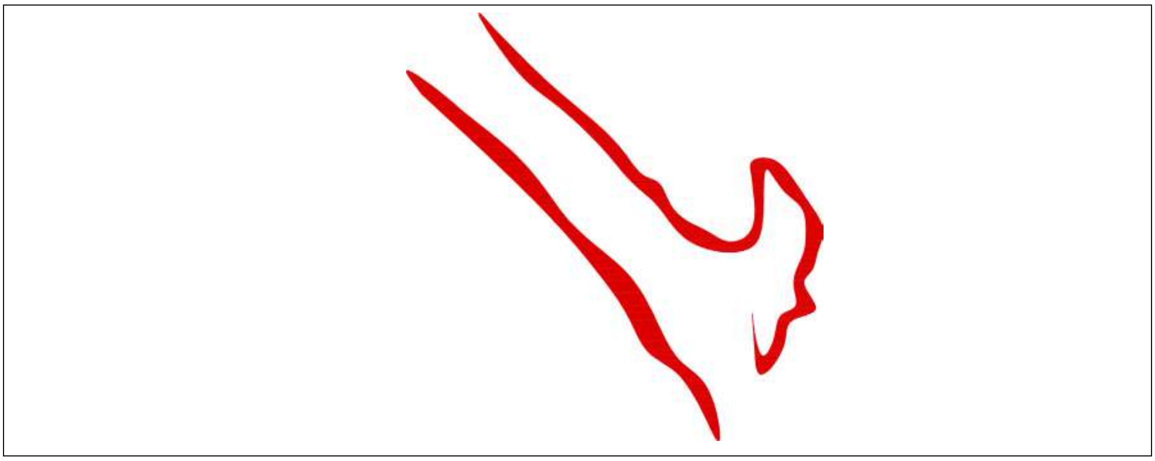
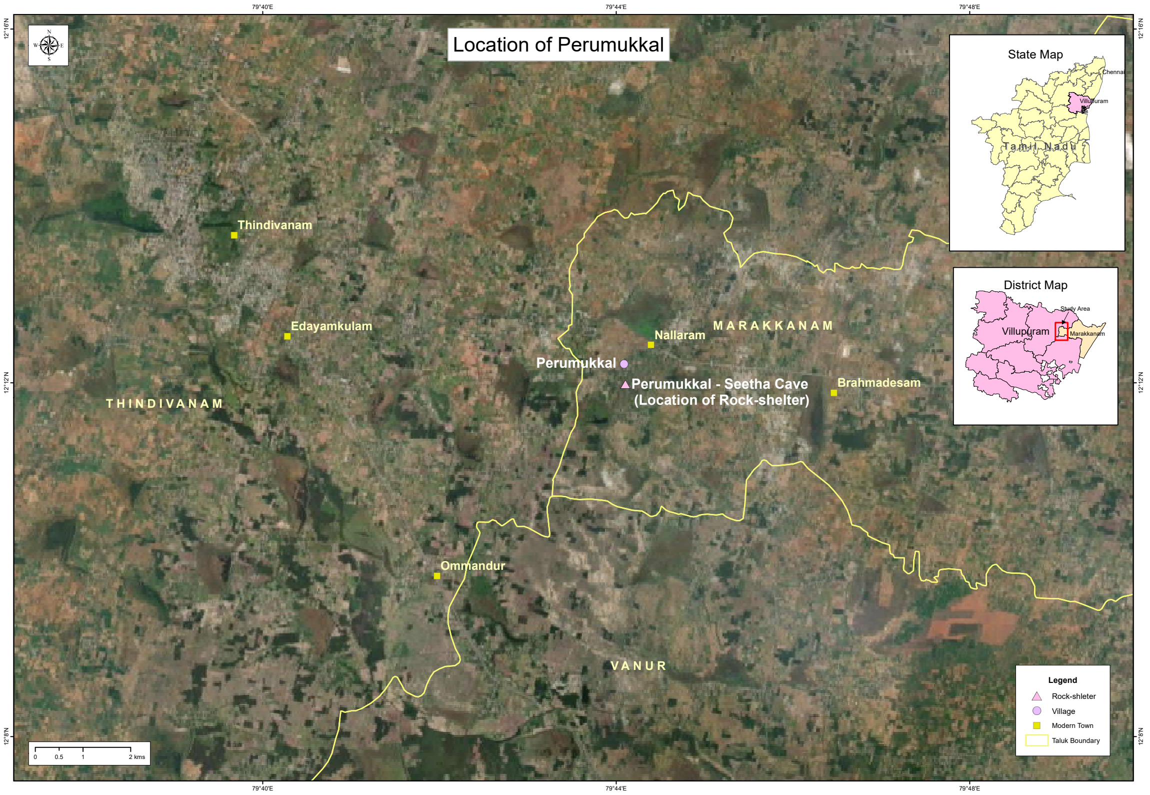


Fig. 4.7.14b Unidentified

4.8 Perumukkal

Perumukkal village (12.19969 N; 79.73505 E) is located in Tindivanam taluk of Villupuram district. The village lies 45 km north of Villupuram, 10 km east of Tindivanam and 11 km west of Marakkanam (Maps 4.8.1-4.8.2). The hillock lies south of the village (Fig. 4.8.1) The Chola inscription found in the temple located on the top of the hill mentions this village as Perumukkal alias Gangaikondacholanallur of Oyma-nadu of Jeyakondacholamandalam (Vasanthakalyani 1992:10-17) (Fig.4.8.2). The first petroglyph of Tamil Nadu locally called Seetha guha was noticed in a natural cave located behind the Shiva temple Sri Mukthaleeswarar and on the eastern side of the fortification wall (Fig. 4.8.3). The Siva temple was built during the reign of Vikrama Chola (1118-1135 CE).

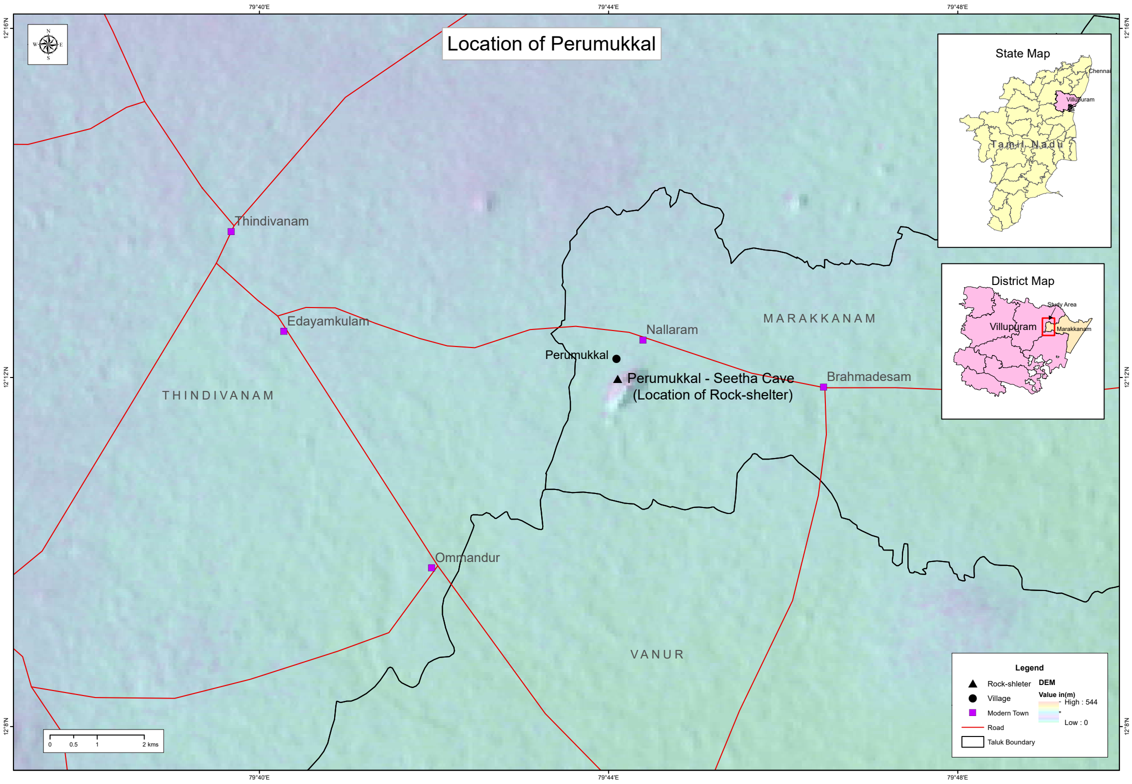

Location of Perumukkal
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Villupuram
Thindivanam
Edayamkulam
THINDIVANAM
Nallaram
MARAKKANAM
Perumukkal
Perumukkal - Seetha Cave
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Brahmadesam
Ommandur
VANUR
Legend
Rock-shleter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
79°40'E
79°44'E
79°48'E
12°16'N
12°12'N
12°8'N
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.8.1. Location of rock-shelter

The entrance of the cave is so narrow and one has to crawl from its southern side to get into the cave (Fig. 4.8.4). However, it seems, there must be an entrance on the east earlier but presently the cave has wide opening and deep and sharp slope on its eastern side caused due to the present-day quarrying (Fig. 4.8.5). The quarrying has caused enormous damage to site. The engravings identical to the one found at Edakkal in Kerala are noticed on the wall of the cave (Fig. 4.8.6). The engravings were deeply incised/carved probably with an iron implement. The size of the engravings suggests that they were not engraved on a single occasion rather they might have been engraved periodically. The northern wall had important engravings. The site Palamukkal meaning old Mukkal village lies one kilometre to the east of the cave which is an Iron Age urn burial site (Fig. 4.8.7).

No remains of habitation are noticed in the interior and exterior areas of this cave. Vertical lines, horizontal lines and sloping lines are found in some places, in addition to this more than 70 line drawings of human figures, animals, snake, ladder, trident and unidentifiable lines are present. There is a human figure at the centre around which deer, tiger, trident, bow and arrow were engraved. A vatteluttu inscription reading *irasa* is found on the right top corner of the northern wall. On palaeographical ground, it could be dated to 4th century CE which suggests that this cave was in use till 4th century CE.

Engravings present here are well-planned and executed, but the motive behind this scene are unintelligible. Some engravings are similar to the graffiti marks of the Iron Age and Early Historic times. The cup marks and later scripts, are suggestive that the cave might be in use for a long time. Drawings engraved in the hard rock may be done with a iron chisel, and this indicates that it might belong to the period after the Iron Age and approximately 3000 years old. Through the scenes portrayed in the drawings one could visualize that the people might belong to the settlement of a pastoral community.


Location of Perumukkal
79°40'E
79°44'E
79°48'E
Thindivanam
Edayamkulam
THINDIVANAM
Nallaram
MARAKKANAM
Perumukkal
Perumukkal - Seetha Cave
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Brahmadesam
Ommandur
VANUR
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Villupuram
Legend
Rock-shleter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 544
Low : 0
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.8.2. Location of rock-shelter

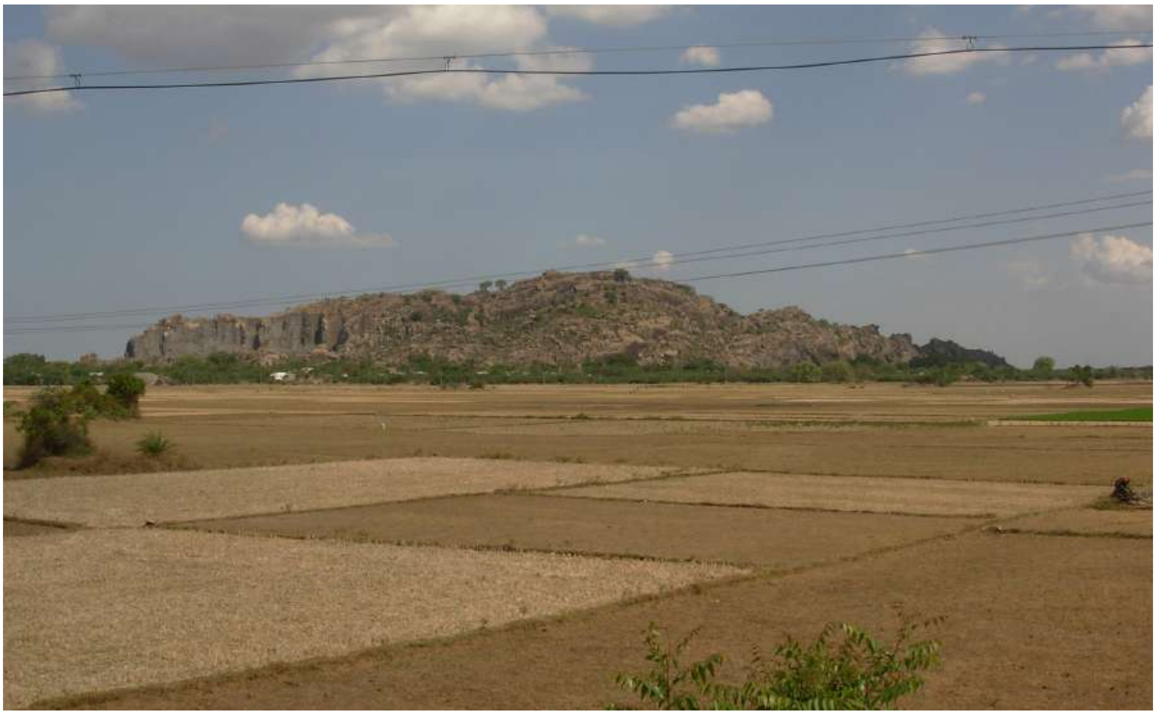


Fig. 4.8.1 General view of the hillock

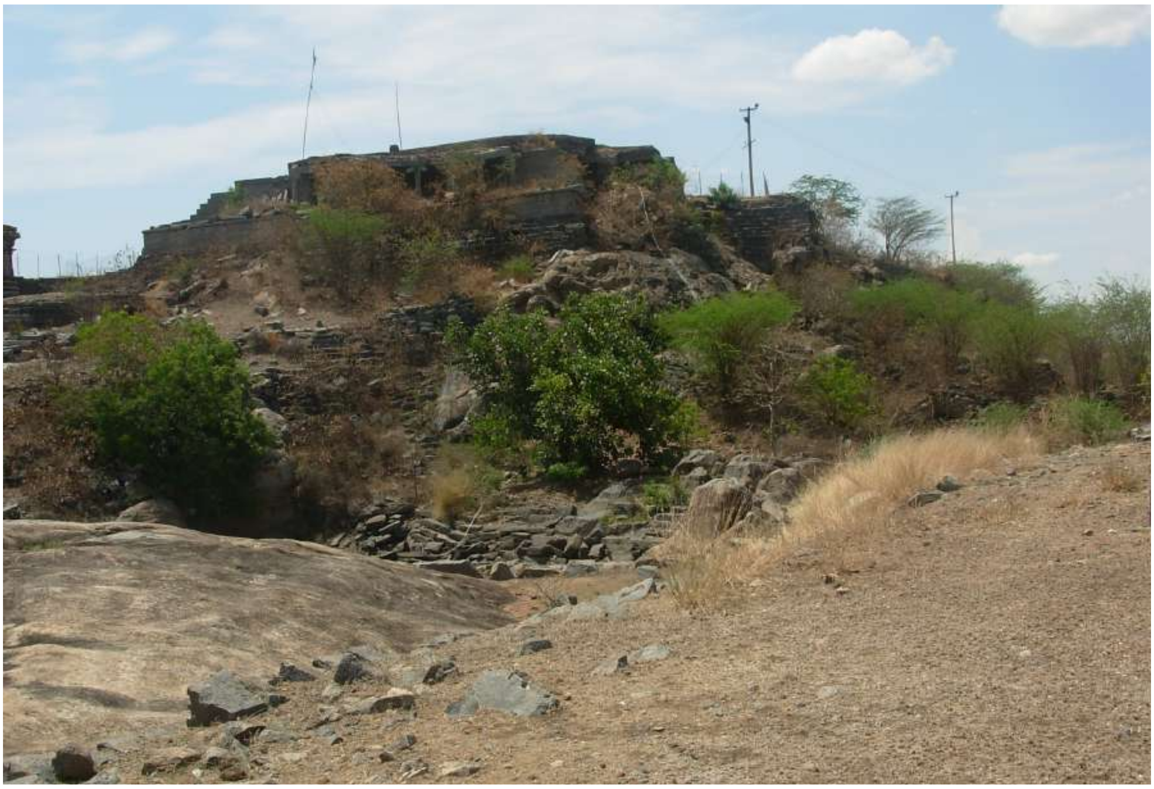


Fig. 4.8.2 General view of the temple

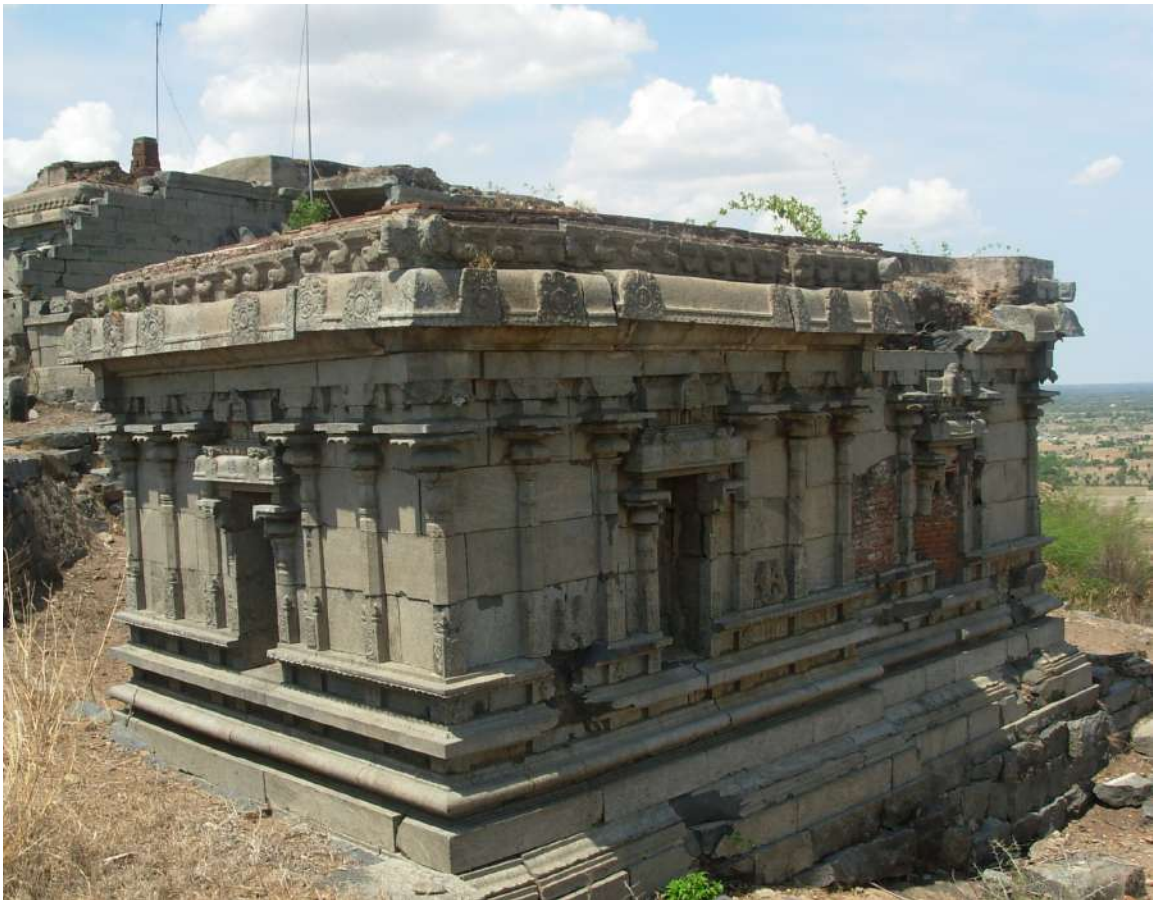


Fig. 4.8.3 Mukthaleeswarar Temple

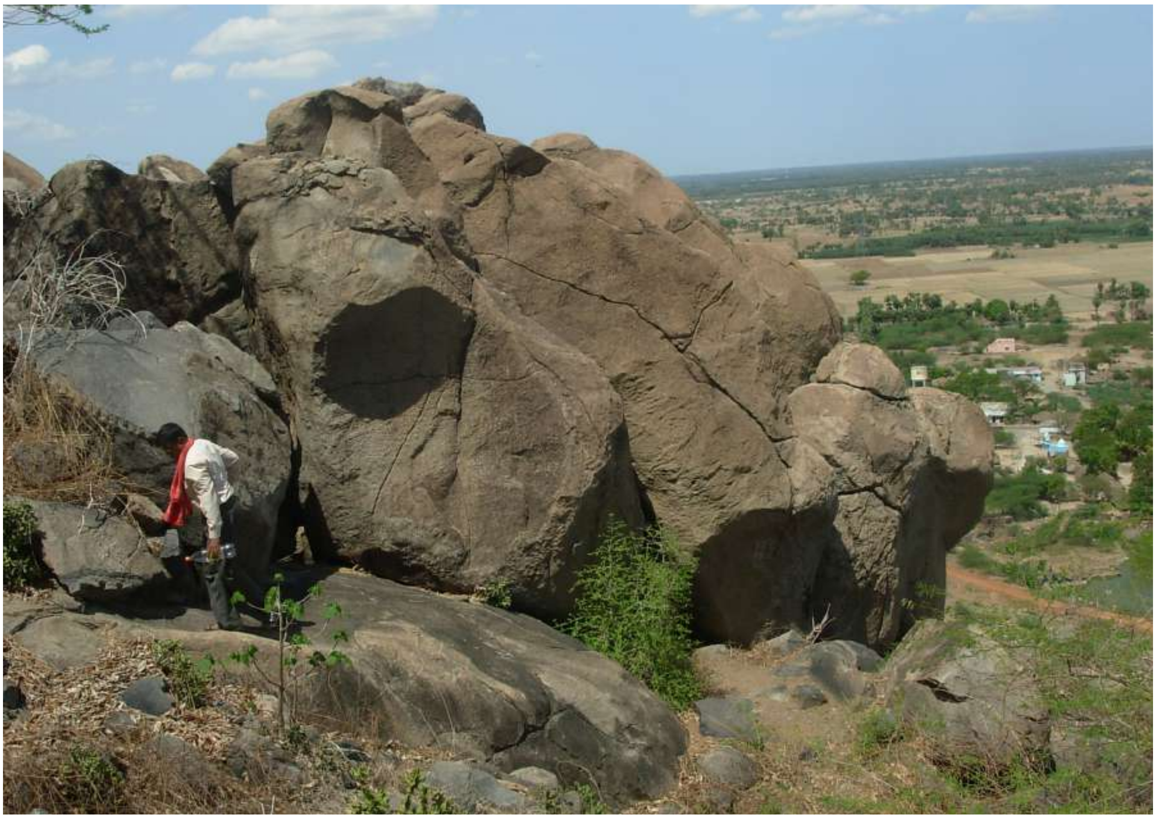


Fig. 4.8.4 Entrance of the cave

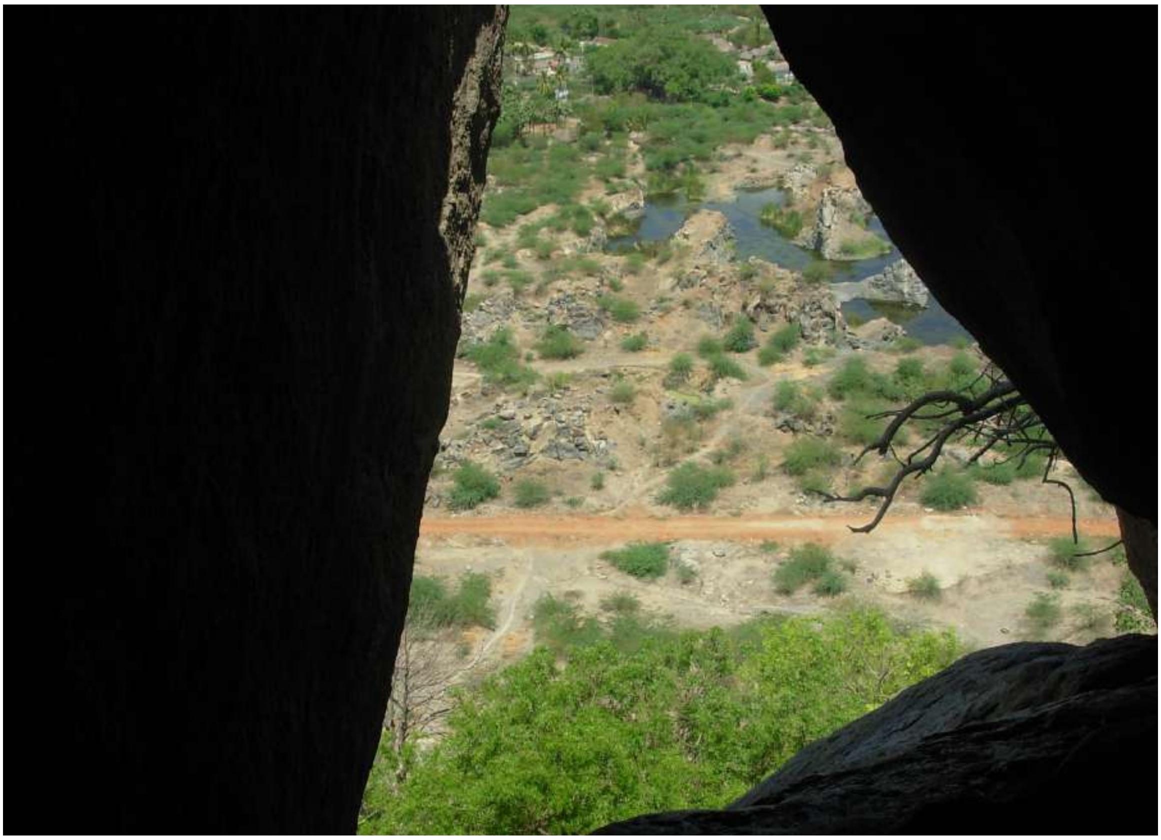


Fig. 4.8.5 Eastern entrance of the cave

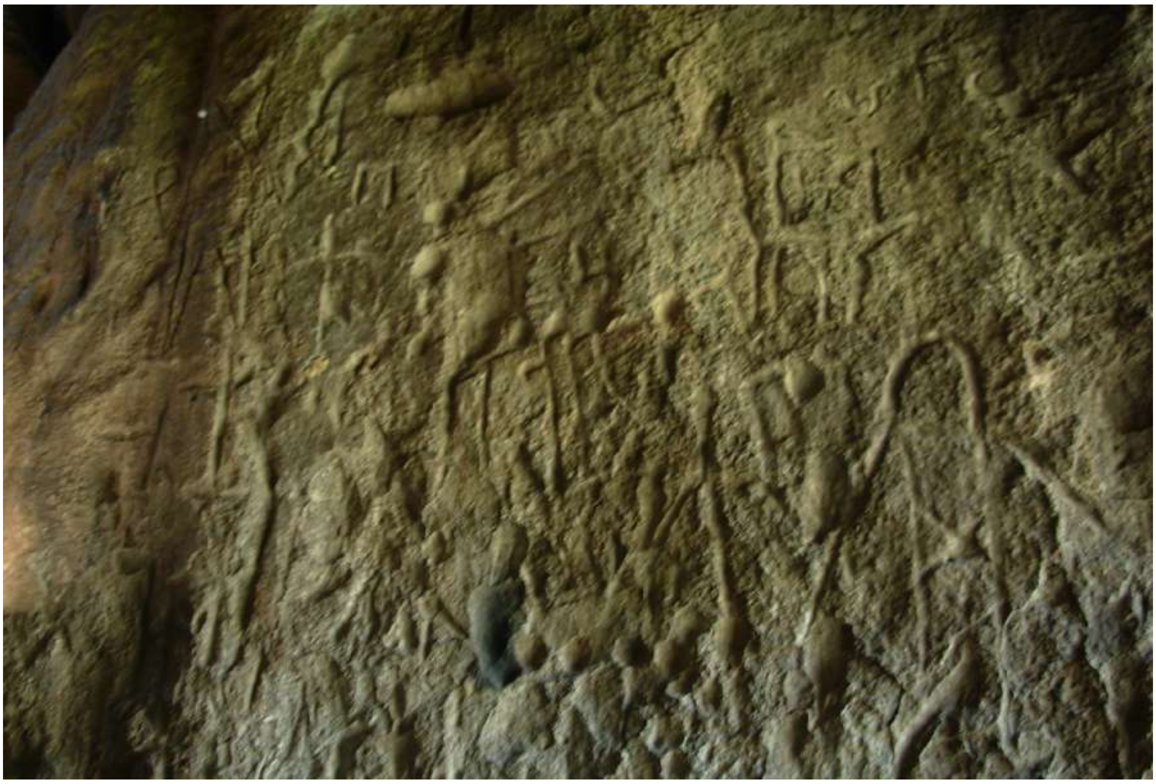


Fig. 4.8.6 Engravings on the northern wall

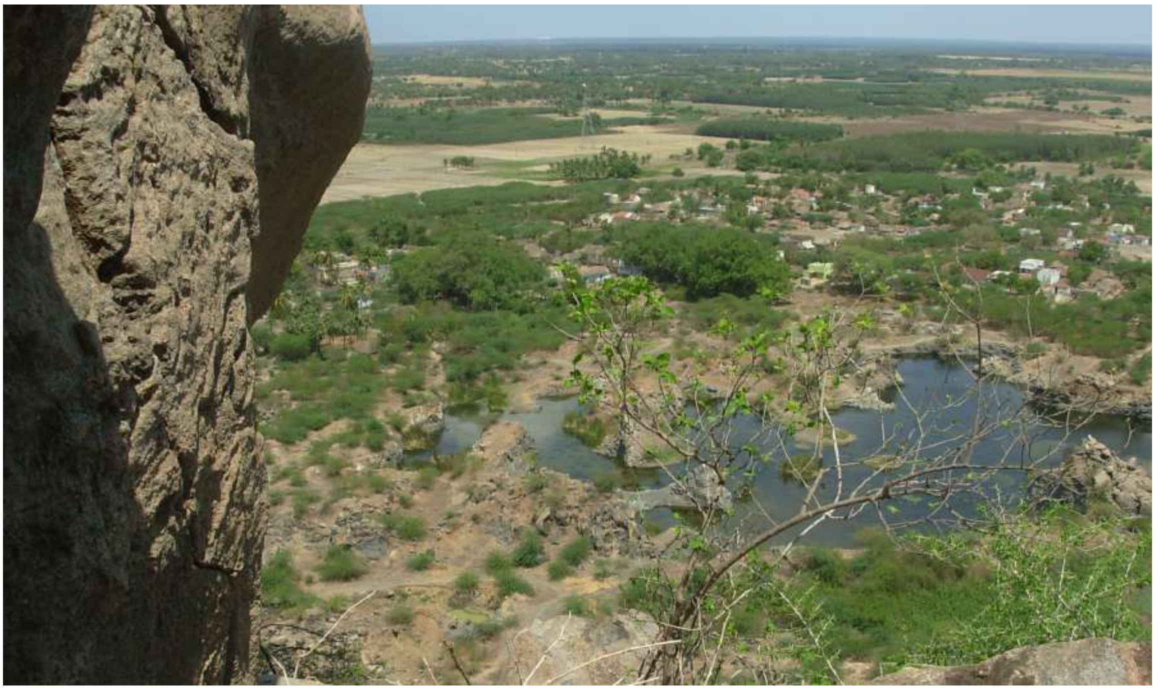


Fig. 4.8.7 View of the Palamukkal

Description

The total length of the rock engravings is about 4 m, the total length of the rock shelter is about 7 m and the total height of the inclined surface of the rocky surface is about 9 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2.80 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Panel Description

A composite anthropomorphic figure with a double head or fish head, with an open mouth where tongue-like feature is noticed on the right portion. To the right of it, a fish figure is engraved. Both are made of simple line carving, surrounded by animals, humans and several unidentified small carvings (Figs. 4.8.8a-4.8.8c).

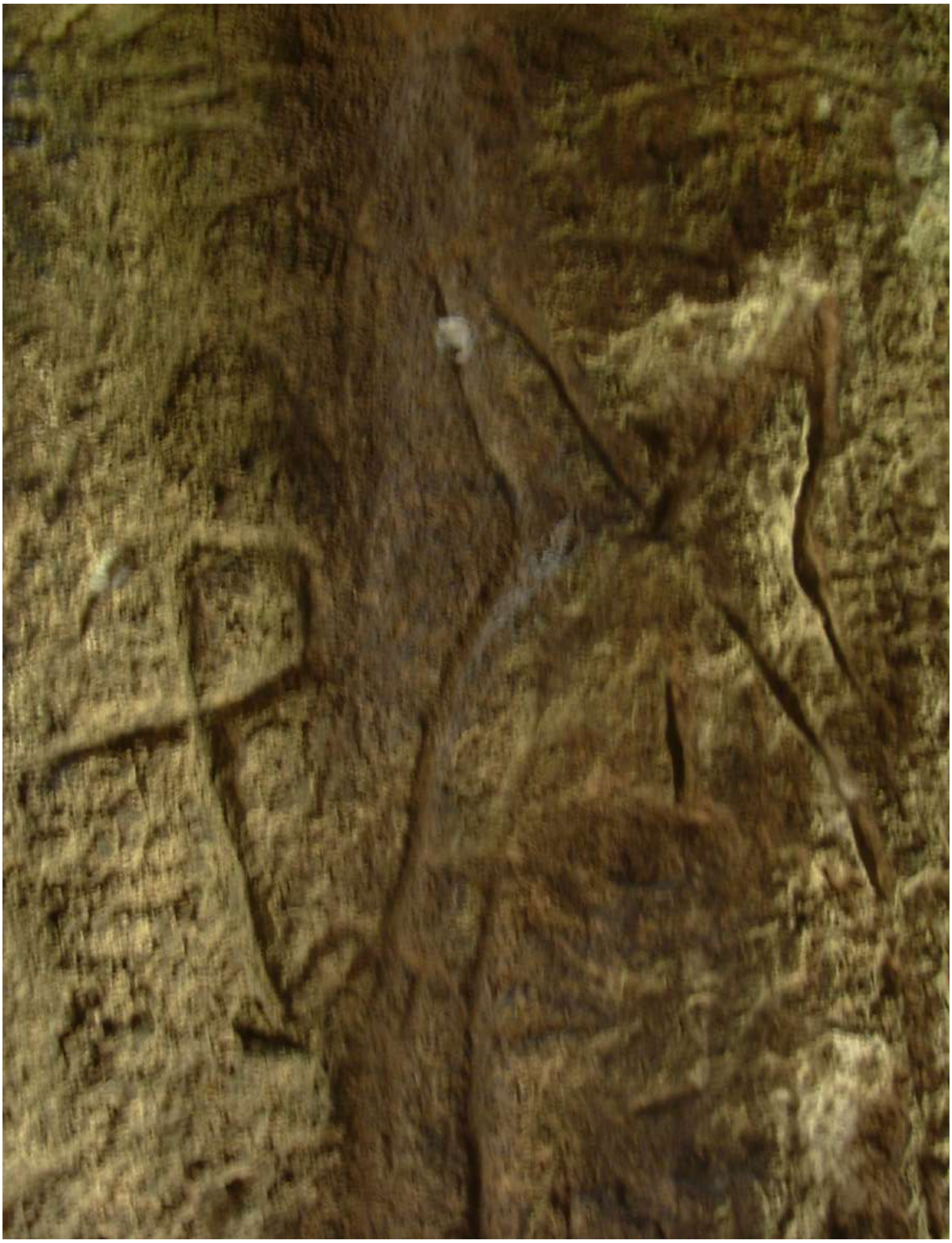


Fig. 4.8.8a Human, fish and animal

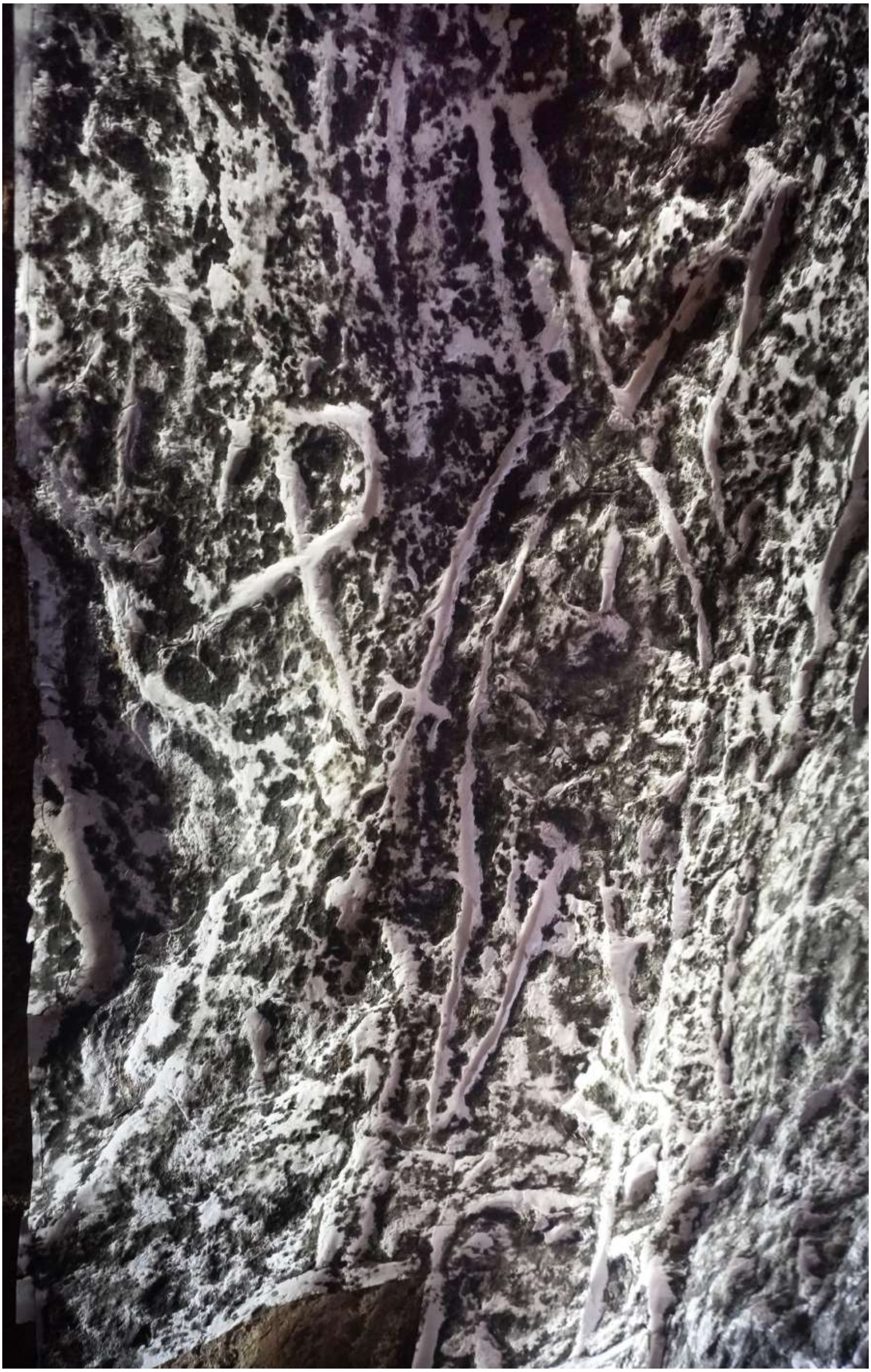


Fig. 4.8.8b Human, fish and animal

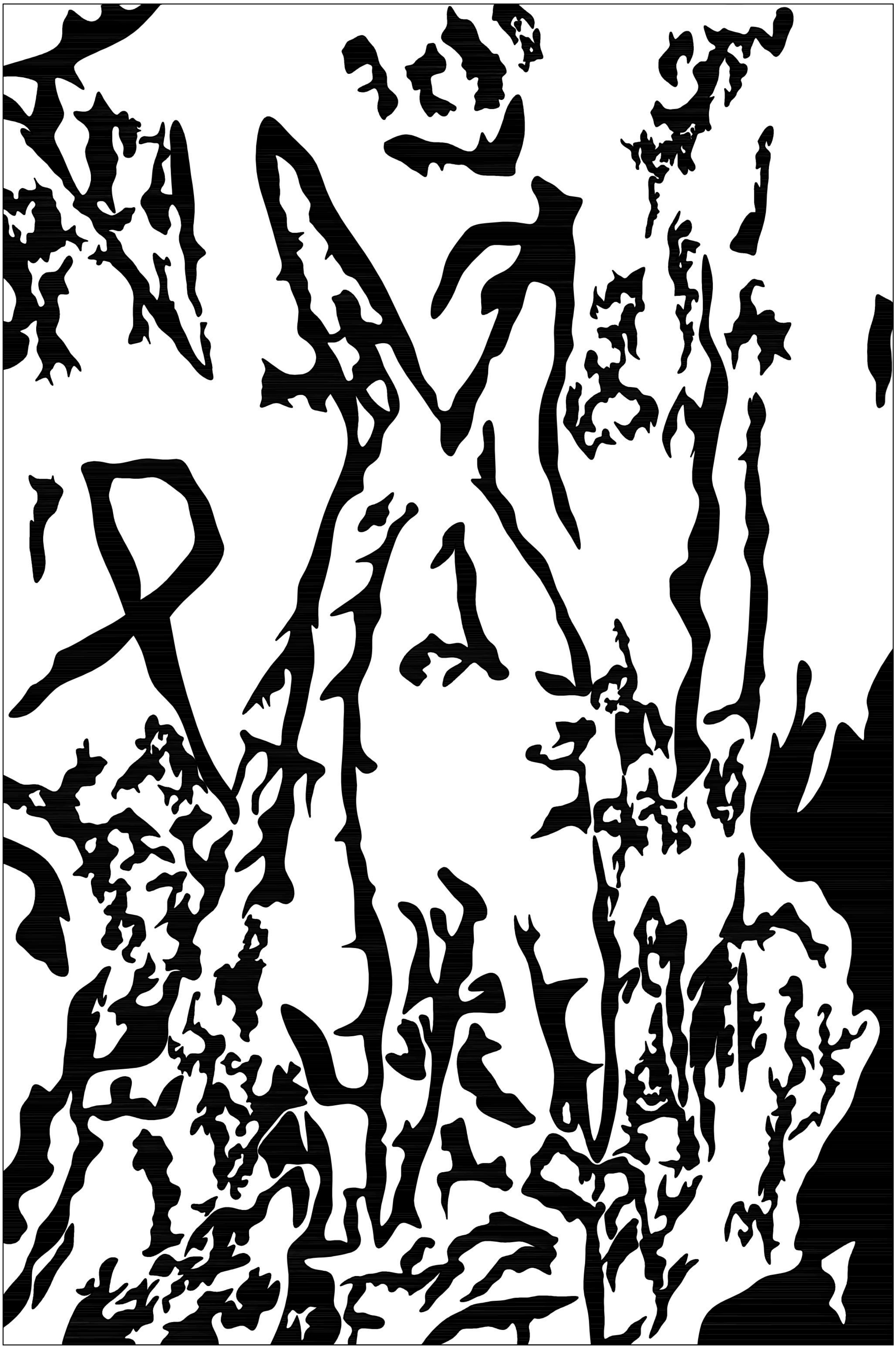


Fig. 4.8.8c Human, fish and animal

This panel (Figs. 4.8.9a-4.8.9c) is a simple line human figure, with a slanting cross on the mid portion of the body. Cupule mark on the left bottom portion of the image. To the right of the head portion, another small-sized human carving is found. The panel is clustered with several animals, humans and several unidentified carvings

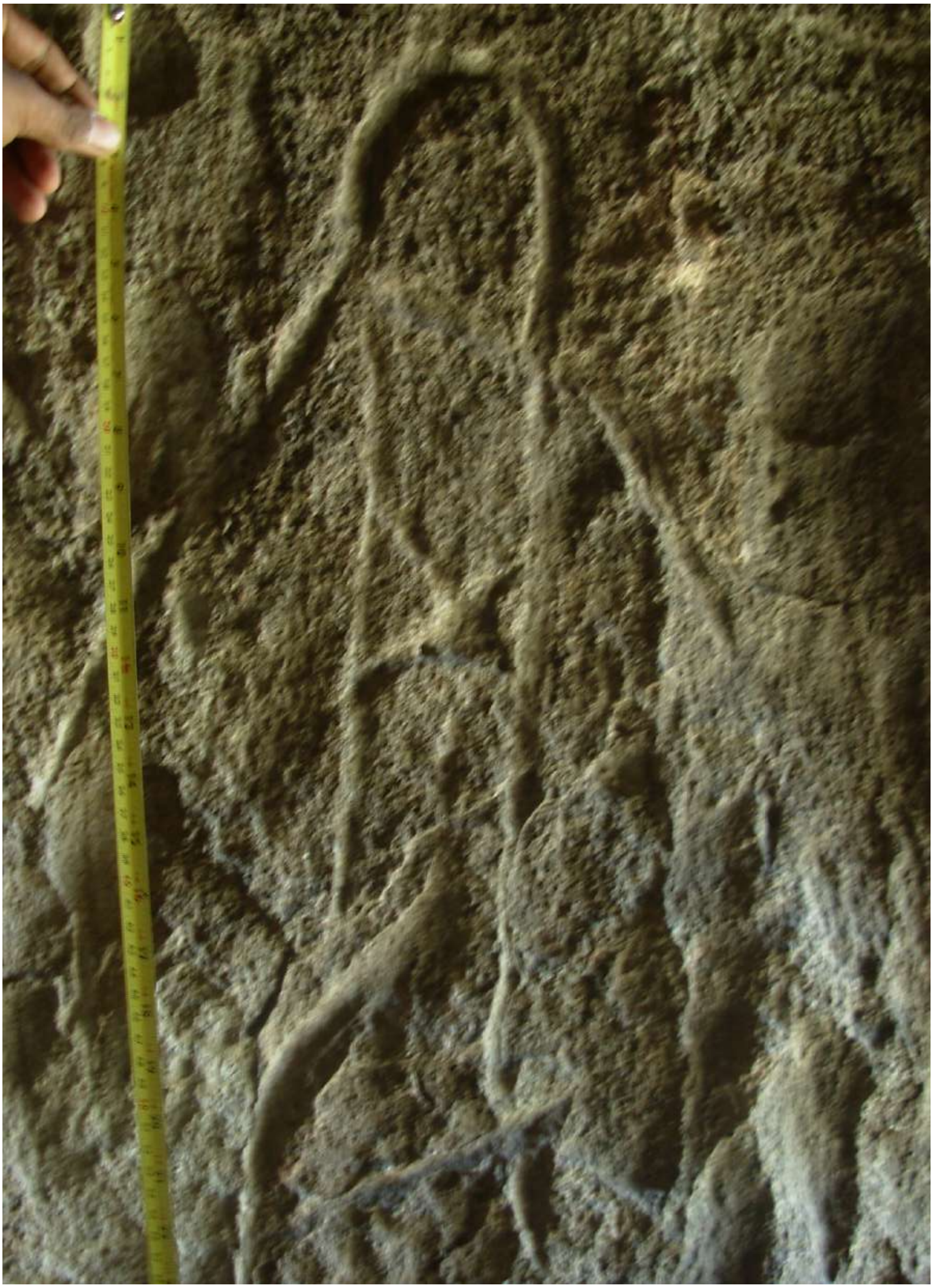


Fig. 4.8.9a Human

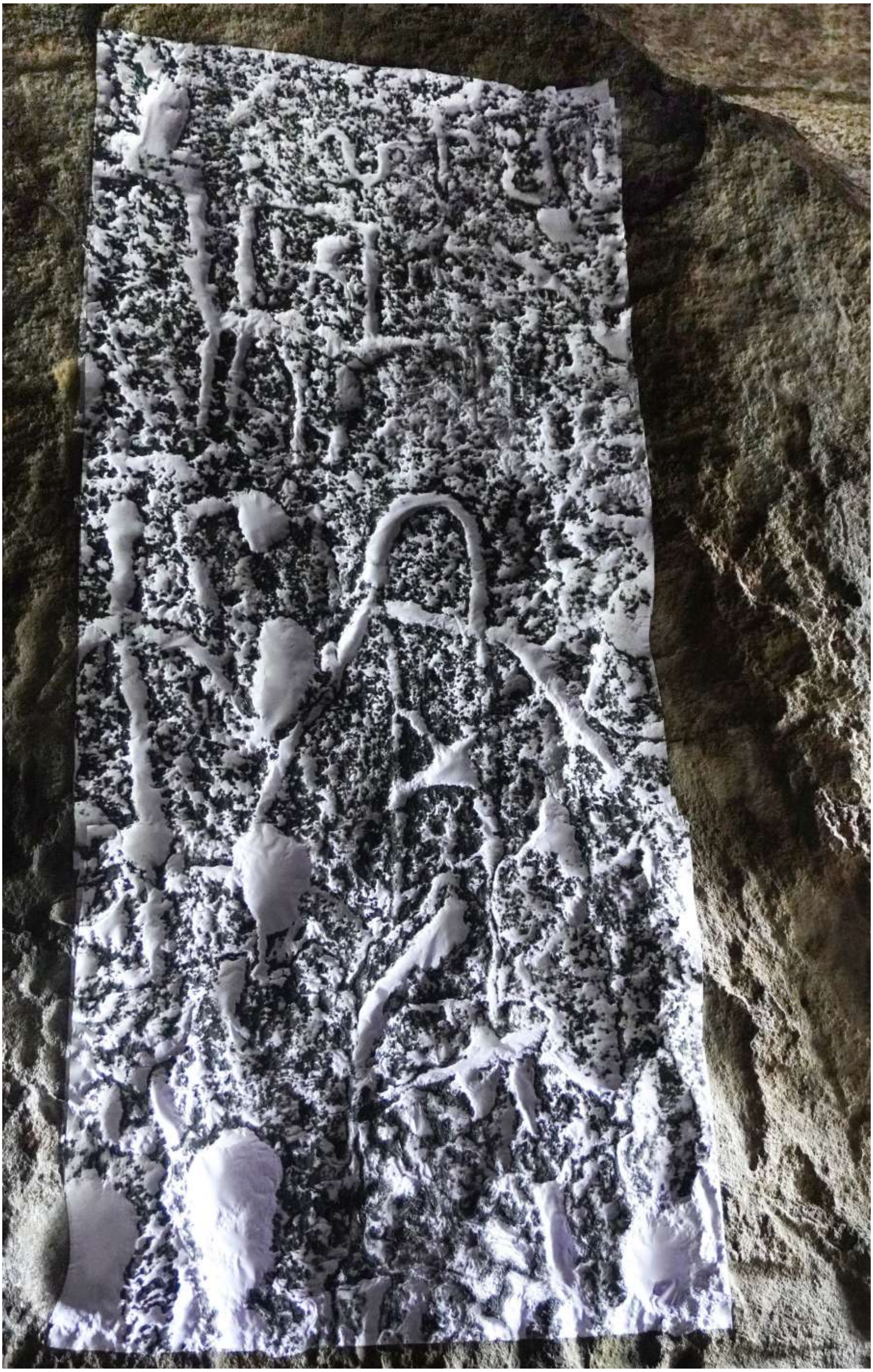


Fig. 4.8.9b Human

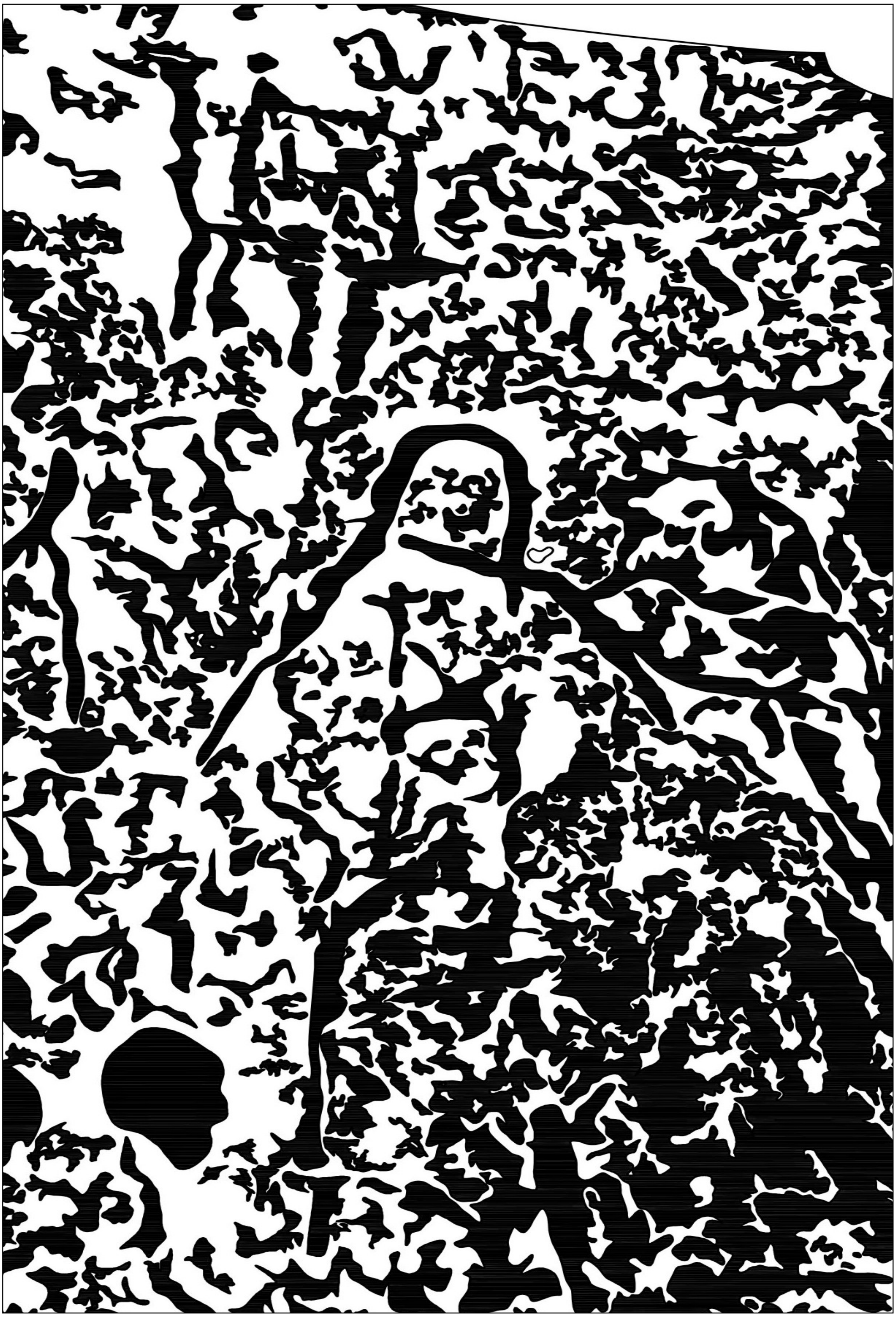


Fig. 4.8.9c Human

Two wavy line carvings are supposed to be snakes of which one on the right is shorter compared to the left. Above the shorter line there is a small carving, possibly of a goat/deer/antelope is assumed based on the rear bending horn feature. Beneath the two wavy lines, there are a few identifiable human figures carved in different postures (Figs. 4.8.10a-4.8.10c).

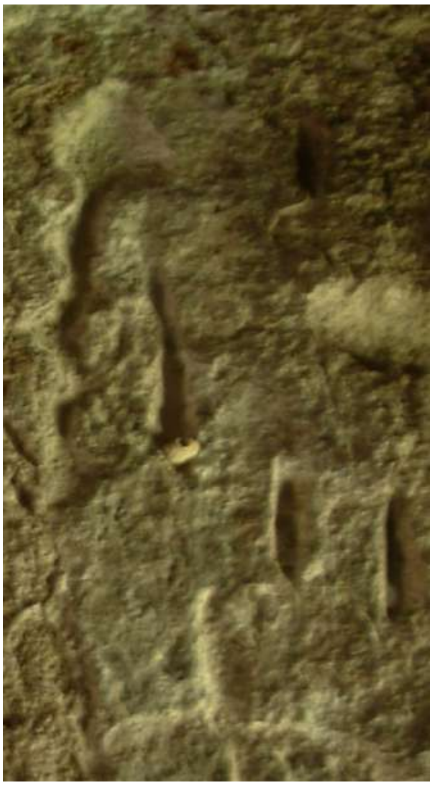


Fig. 4.8.10a Wavy like sign

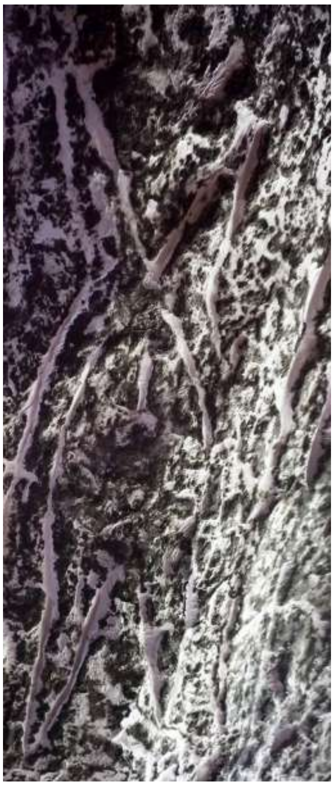


Fig. 4.8.10b Wavy like sign

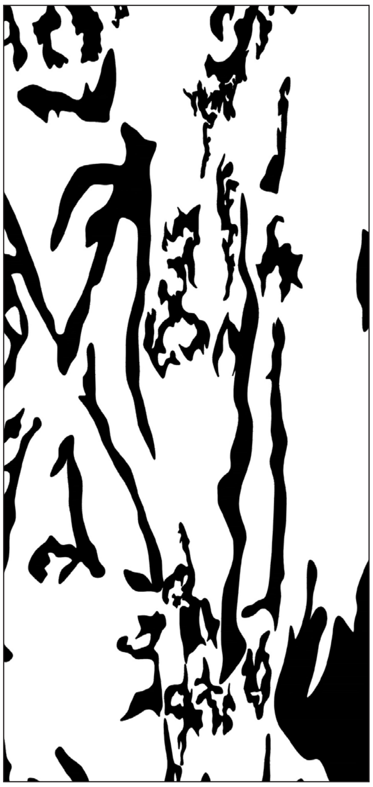


Fig. 4.8.10c Wavy like sign

Human figure with featureless head, extended hands, the right hand shown holding a weapon and the legs shown in motion, with the left leg grounded and the right leg on swing can be observed. Besides, various animal figures are shown surrounding the human figure of which some of them are distinguishable and most aren't (Figs. 4.8.11a-4.8.11c).

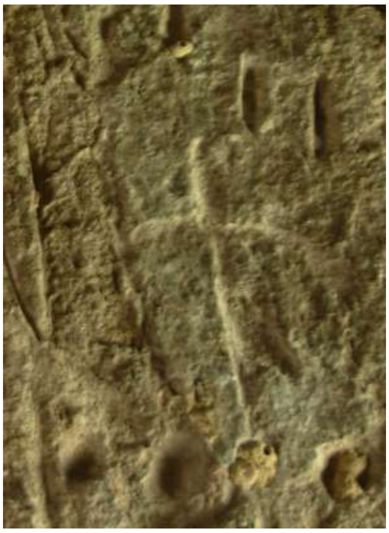


Fig. 4.8.11a Human

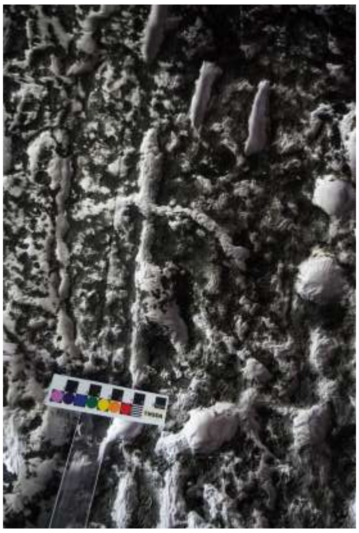


Fig. 4.8.11b Human

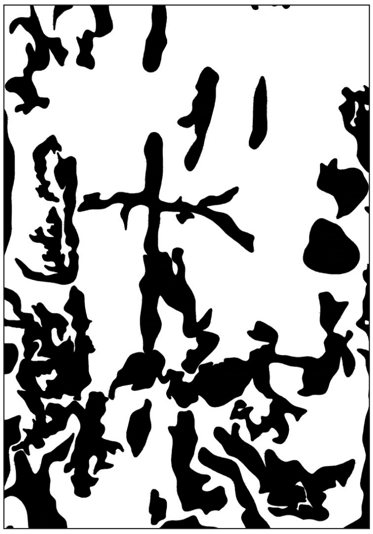


Fig. 4.8.11c Human

Simple human figure is shown with an arch-shaped hands, bent legs and probably ithyphallic. To the left of it at the level of the hands, one simple short vertical line is shown probably a weapon or a symbol (Figs. 4.8.12a-4.8.12b).

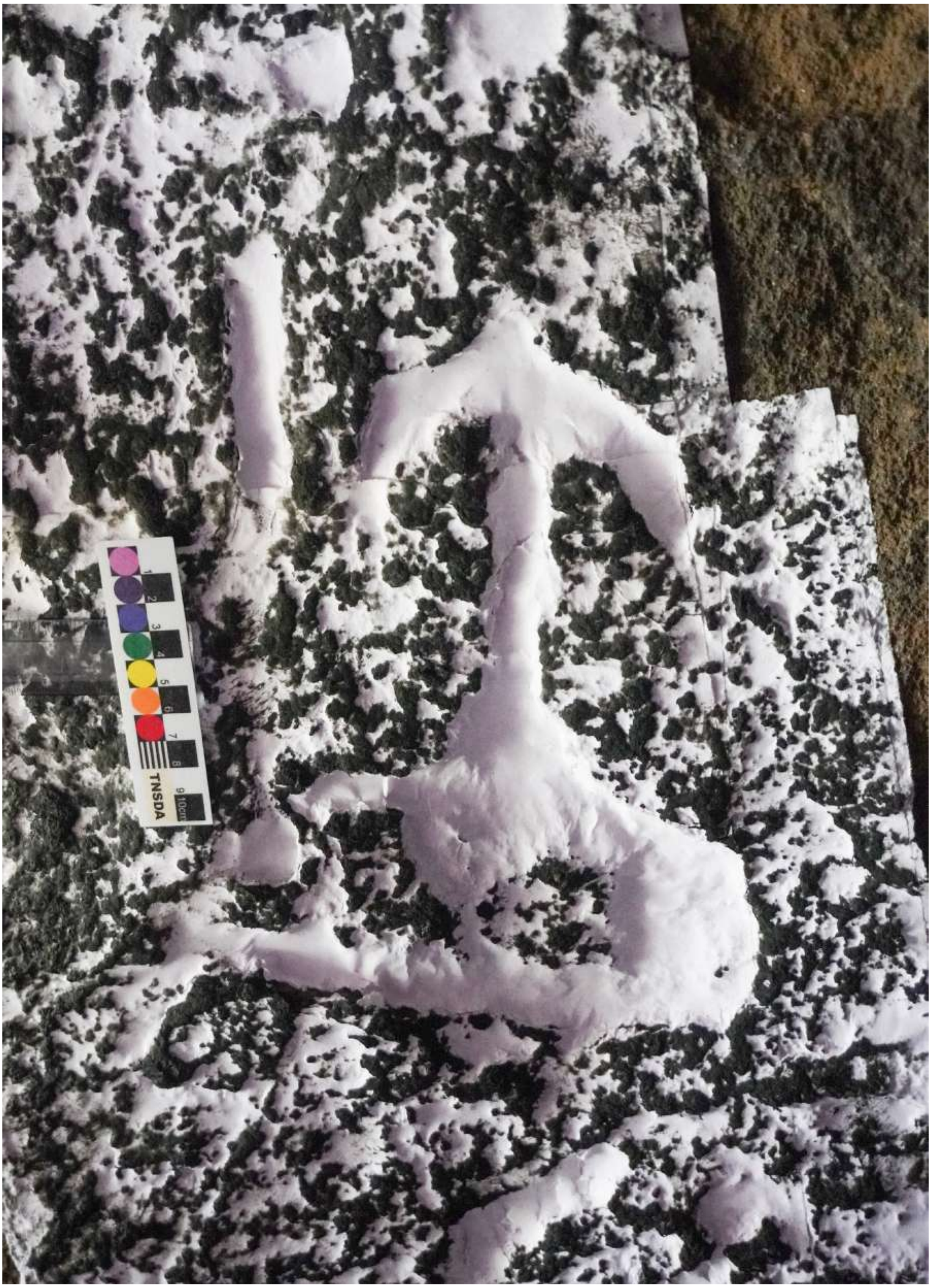


Fig. 4.8.12a Bow and arrow

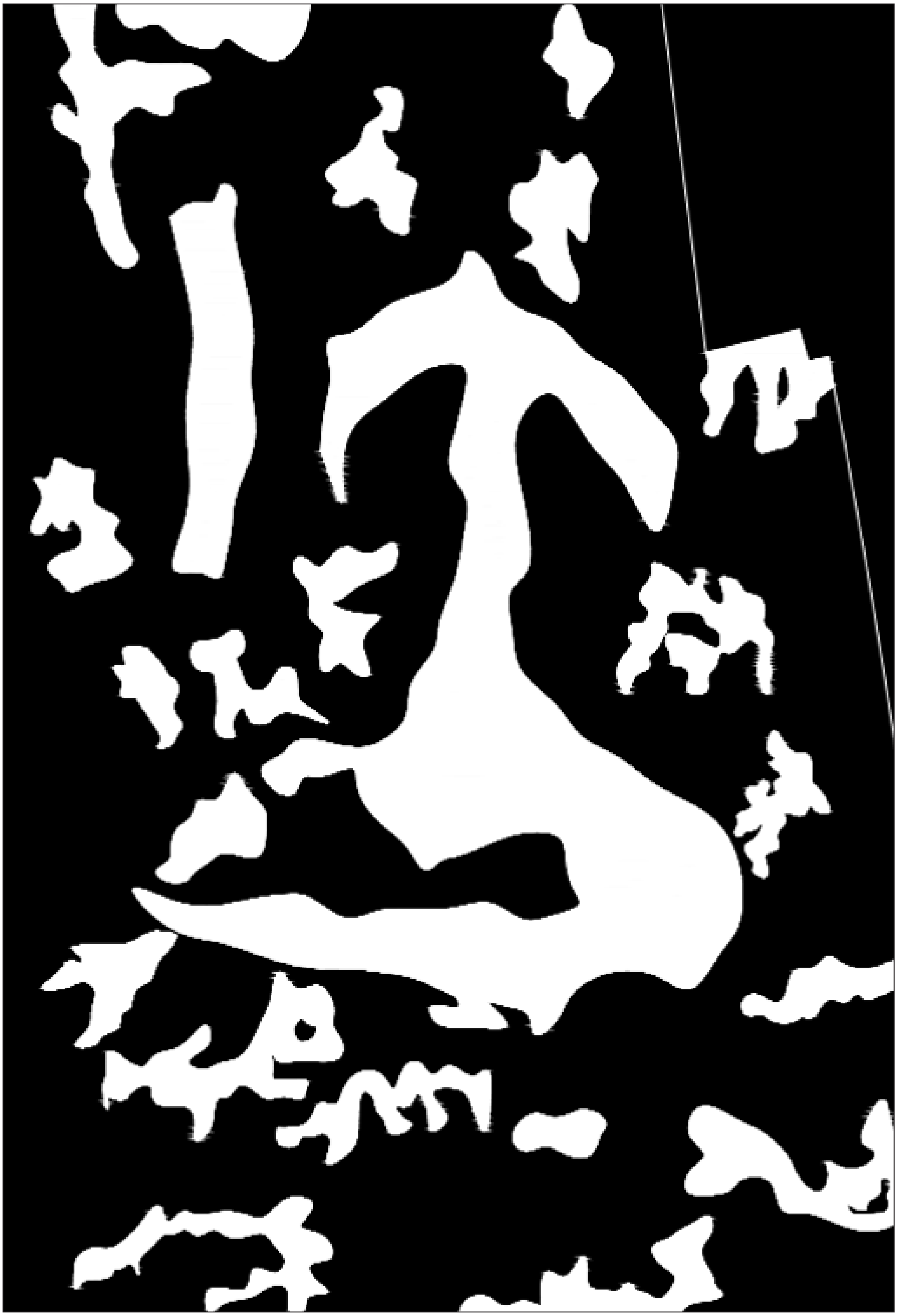


Fig. 4.8.12b Bow and arrow

A vatteluttu inscription reading *irasa* datable to 4th century CE on palaeographical ground (Figs. 4.8.13a-4.8.13c).

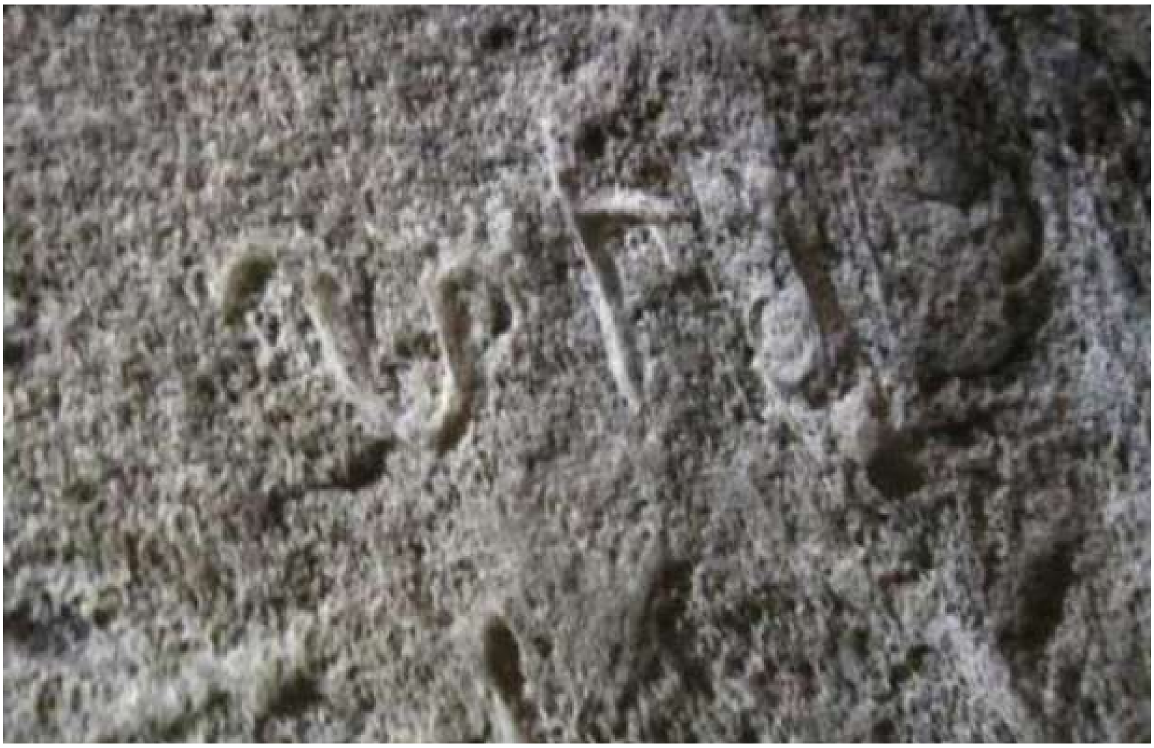


Fig. 4.8.13a A vatteluttu inscription reading 'irasa'

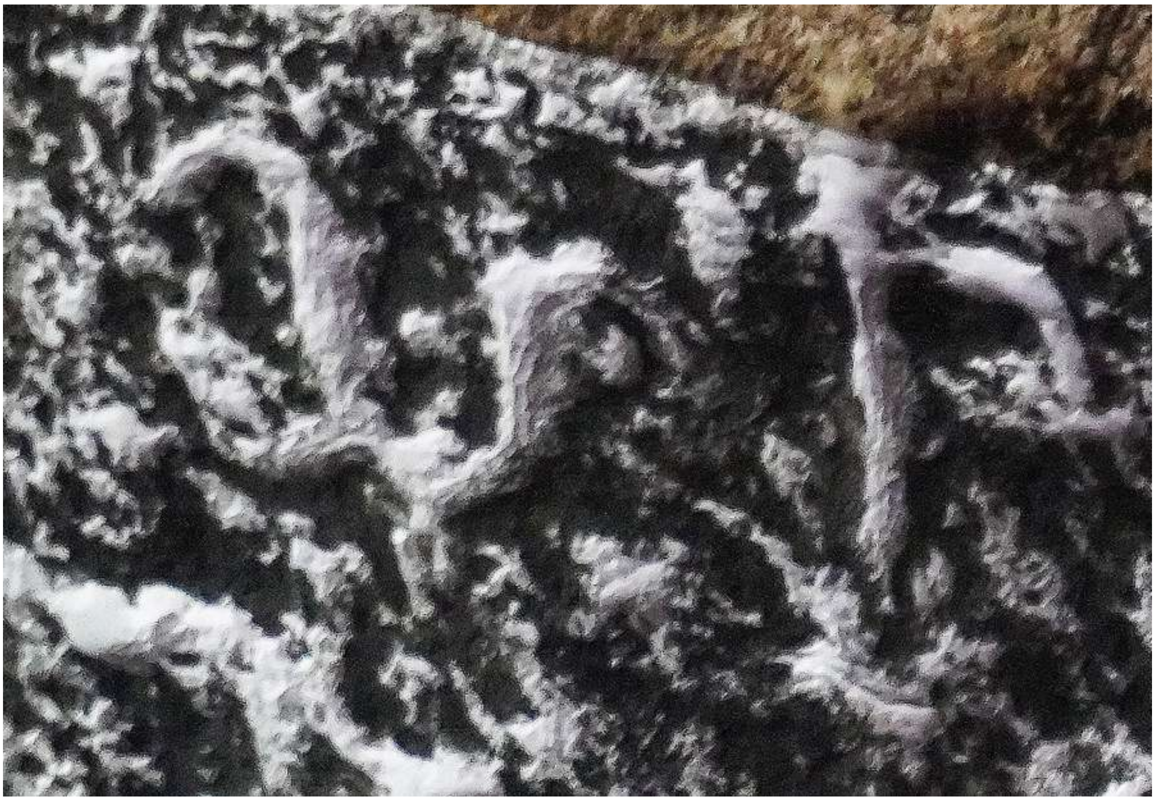


Fig. 4.8.13b A vatteluttu inscription reading 'irasa'

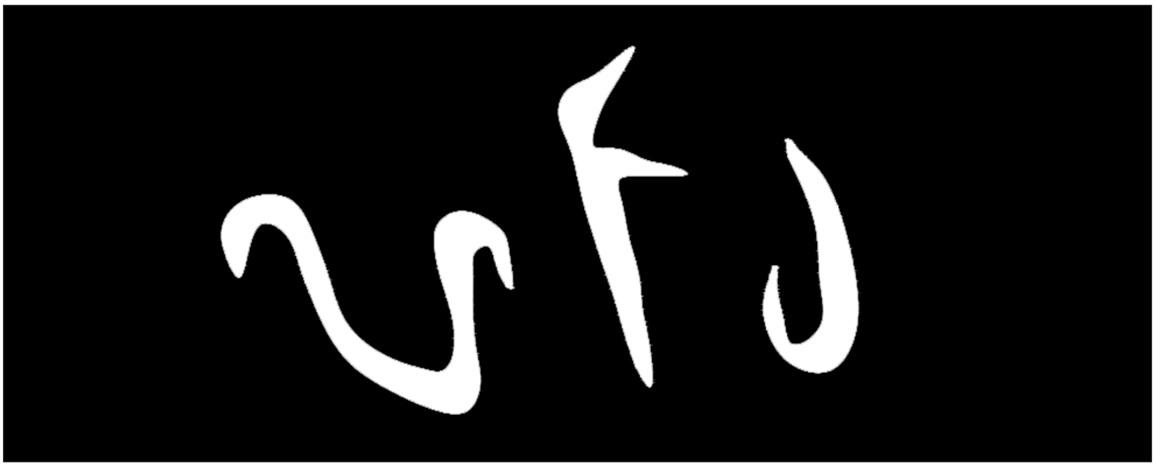


Fig. 4.8.13c *A vatteluttu inscription reading 'irasa'*

Two cup-marks carved in horizontal orientation surrounded by carvings of several simple linear lines, human, animal and unidentifiable carvings are seen (Figs. 4.8.14a-4.8.14b).

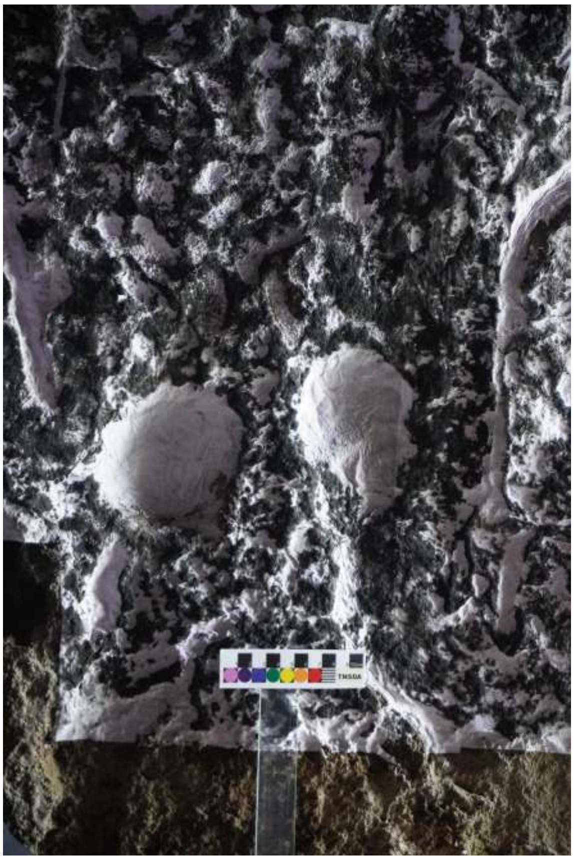


Fig. 4.8.14a *Cup Marks*

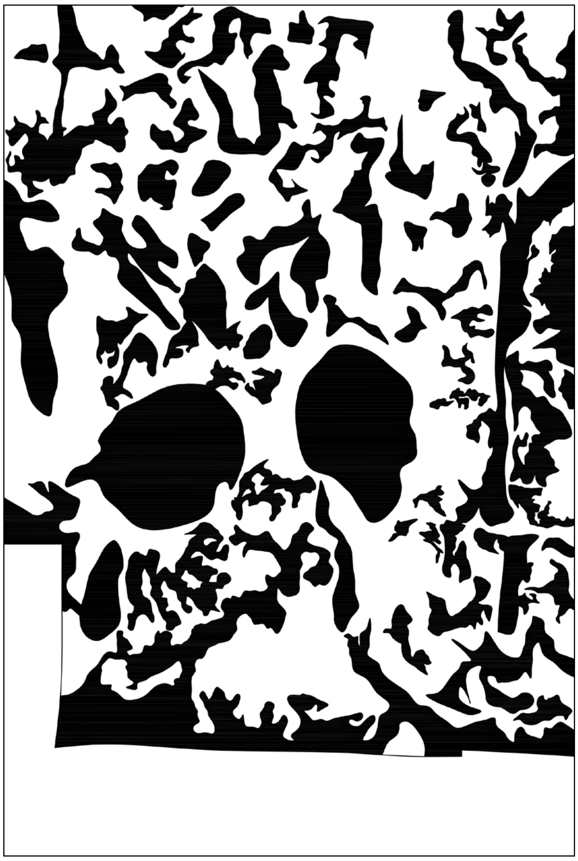


Fig. 4.8.14b *Cup Marks*

The image shows two tridents and single lines. At the top, the trident is surrounded by several single scratches. Likewise, at the bottom, a trident and single stroke are seen (Figs. 4.8.15a-4.8.15b).

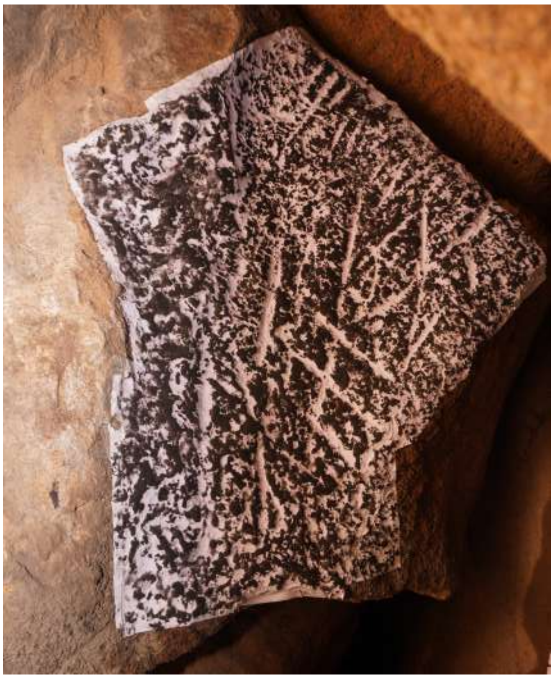


Fig. 4.8.15a Trident and Geometrical lines

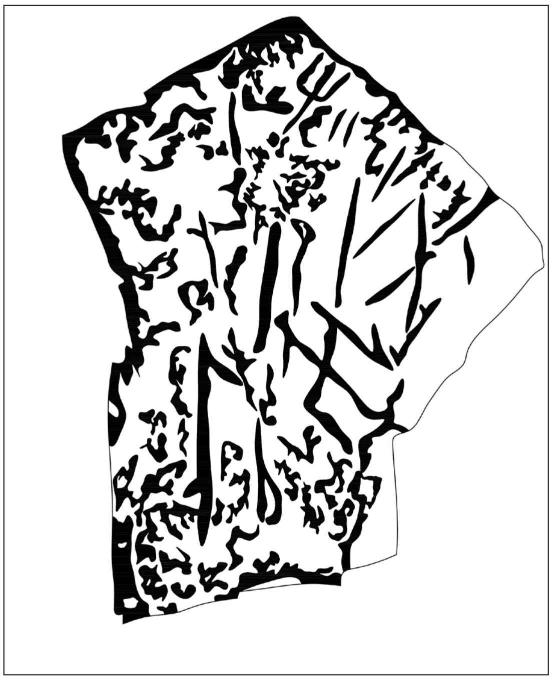


Fig. 4.8.15b Trident and Geometrical lines

The image shows two tridents and single lines. At the top where a trident is placed and it is surrounded by several single scratches. Likewise, at the bottom also, there is a trident and single scratches (Figs. 4.8.16a-4.8.16b).

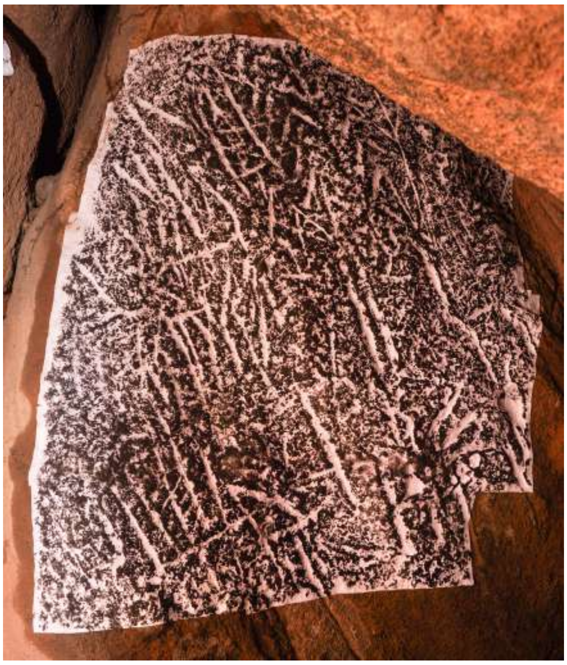


Fig. 4.8.16a Trident and single lines

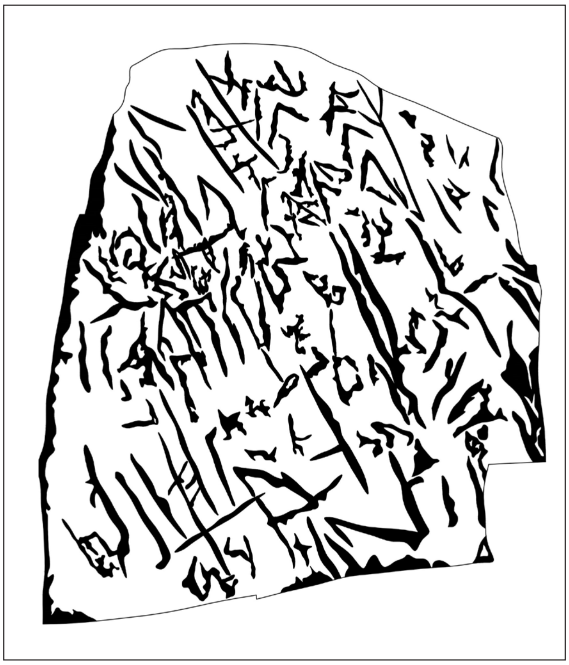


Fig. 4.8.16b Trident and single lines

This panel is engraved with multiple lines of geometric and non-geometric ones, projected human figure (anthropomorphic) with a trident and two cup marks also were engraved at the bottom of this panel (Figs. 4.8.17a-4.8.17b).

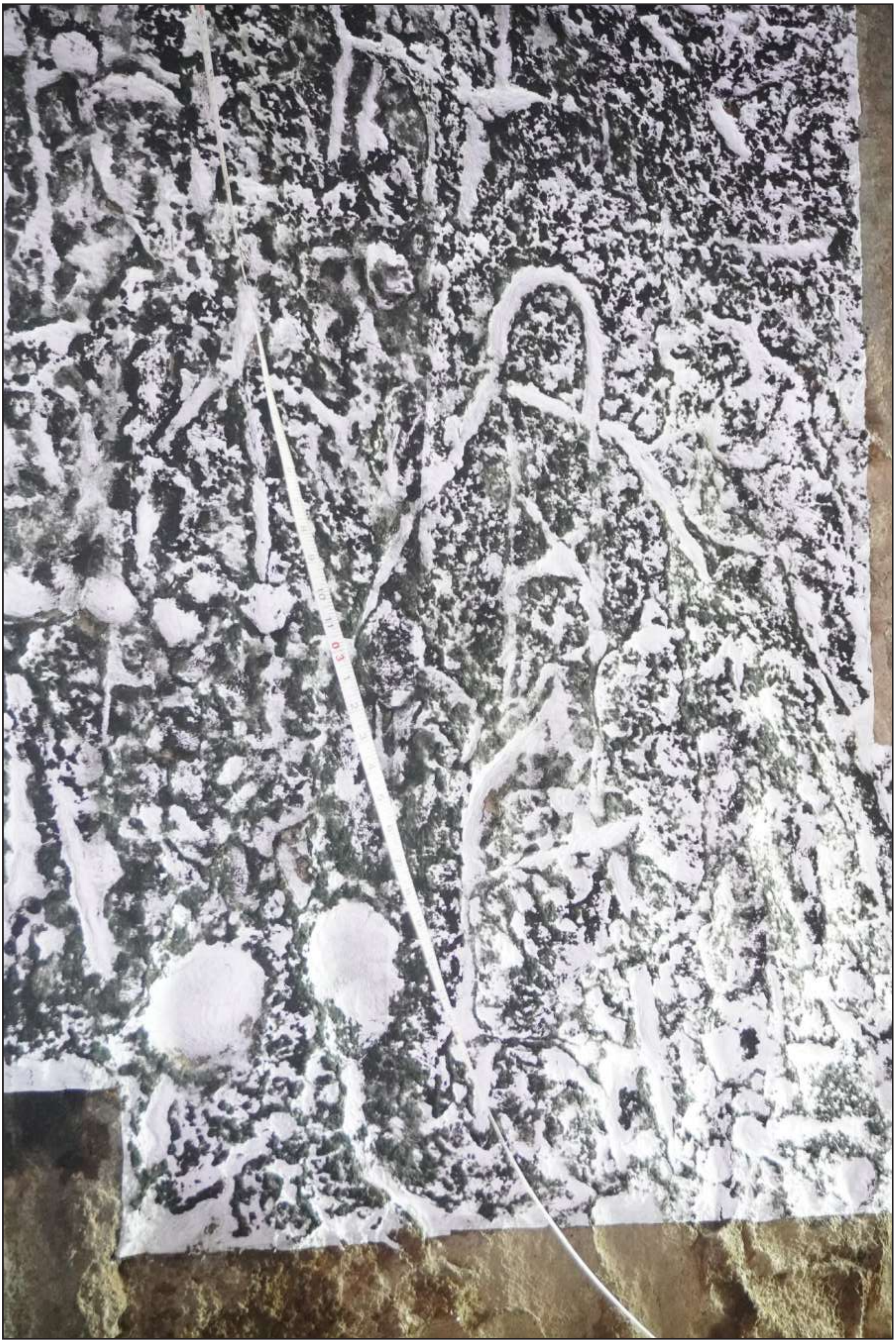


Fig. 4.8.17a Cup marks, anthropomorphic sign

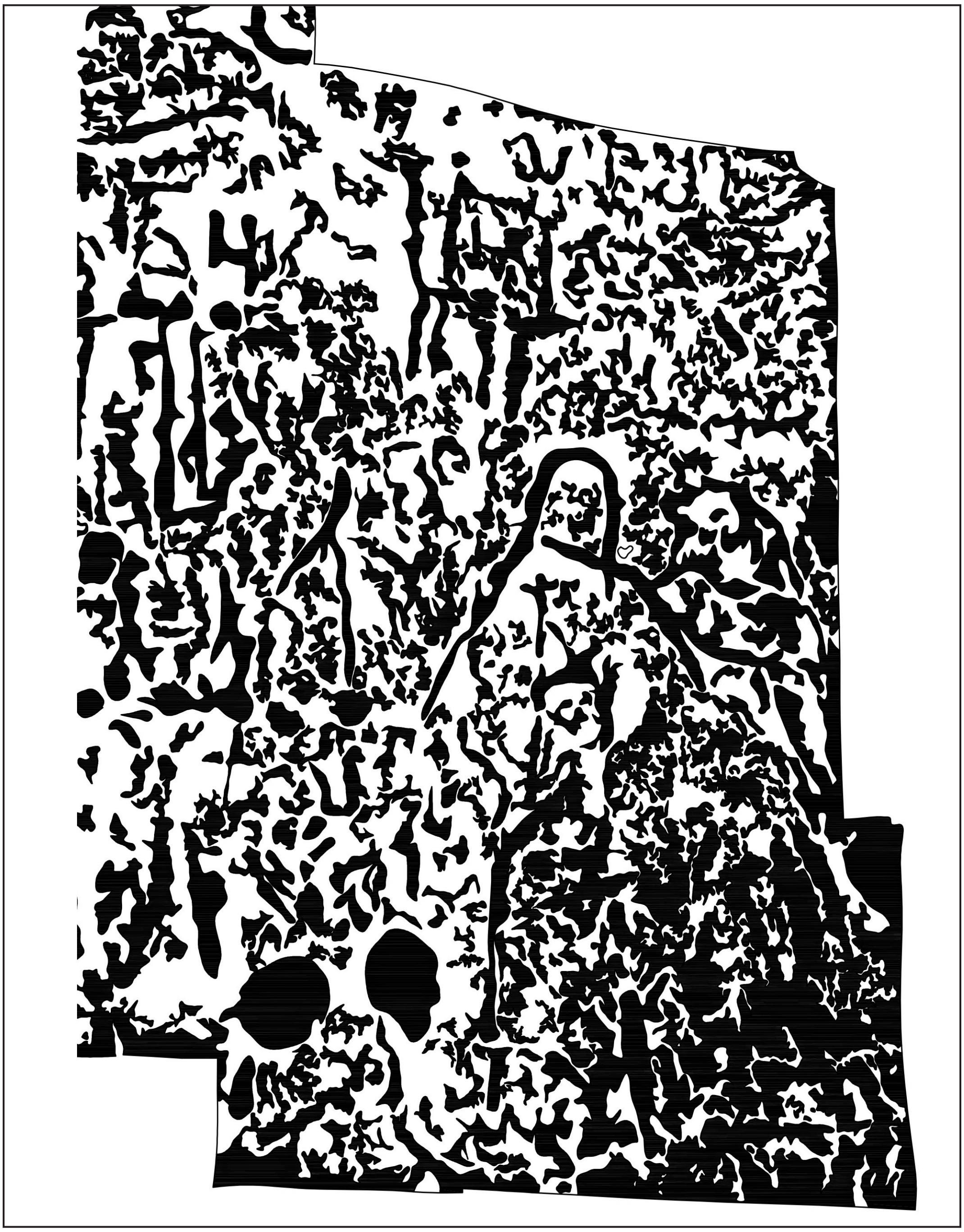
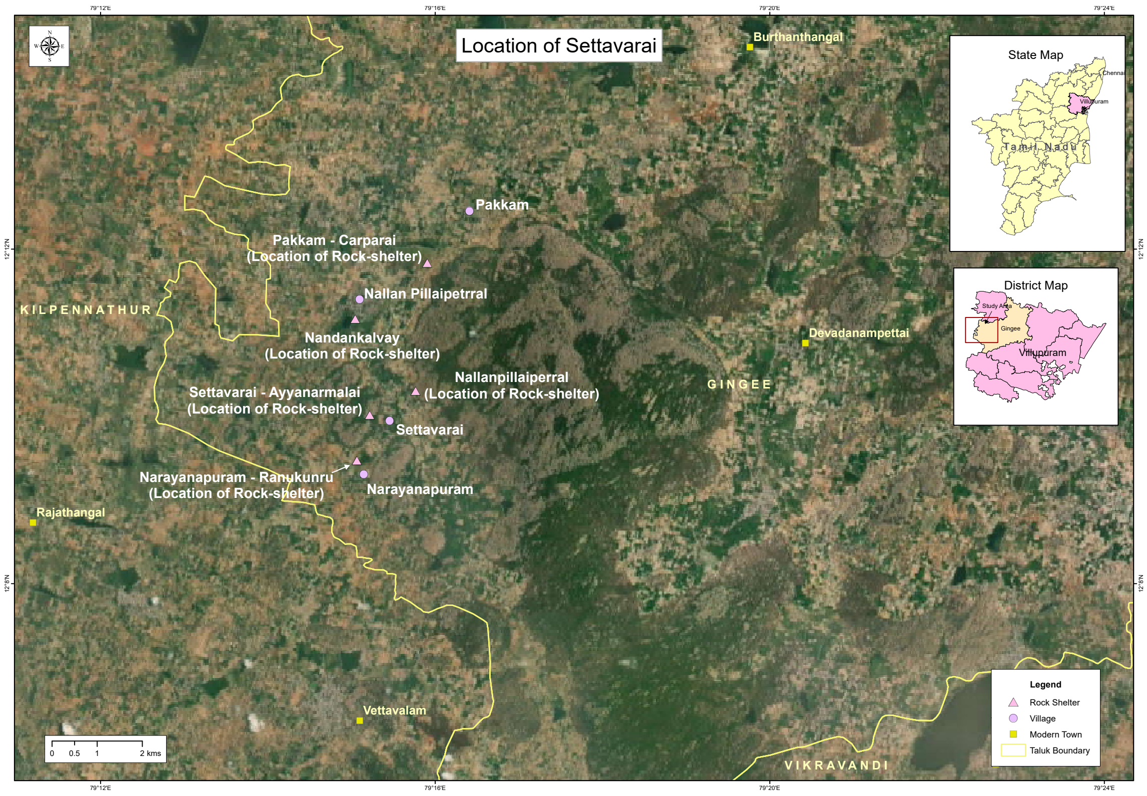


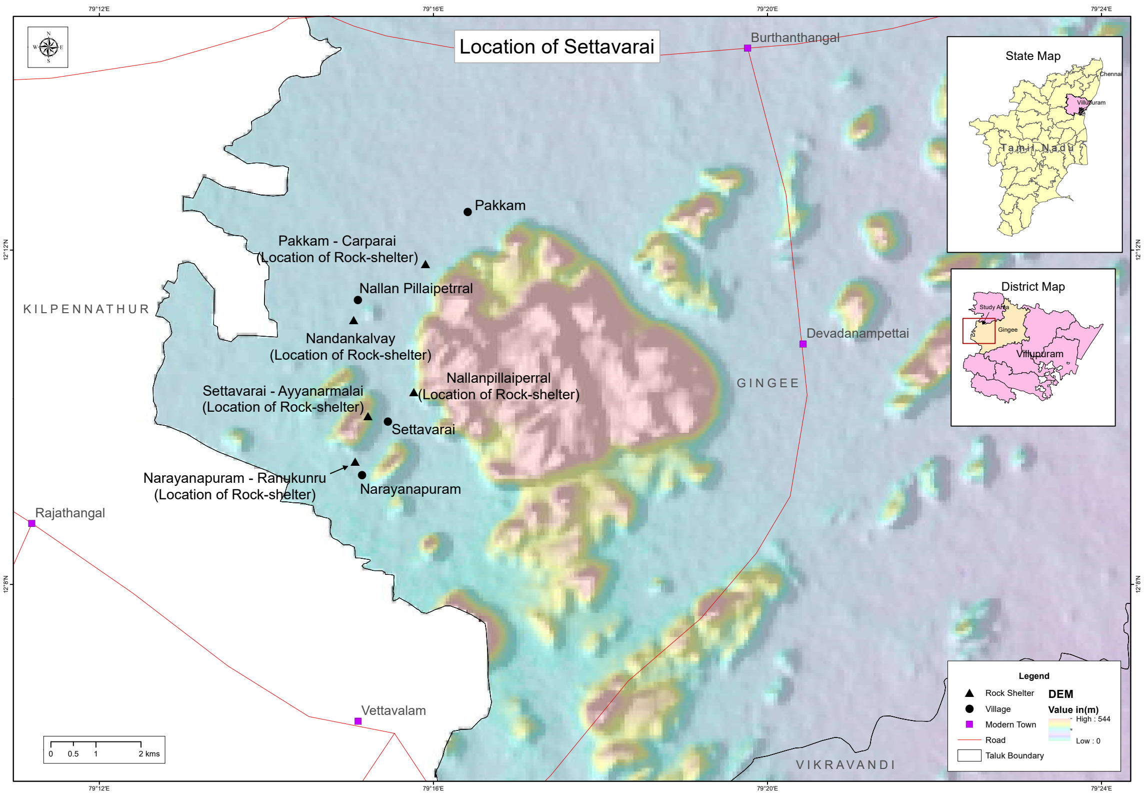
Fig. 4.8.17b Cup marks, anthropomorphic sign

4.9 Settavarai – A Complex

The site of Settavarai (12.18630 N; 79.26130 E), is a protected rock art site of the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, lies on the Vettavalam-Kadaladikulam road at a distance of 27 km west of Gingee in Gingee taluk of Tiruvannamali district (Maps 4.9.1-4.9.2). It is one of the important archaeological sites of Tamil Nadu where one could see rock paintings, rock engravings and Neolithic grinding grooves. The localities of Settavarai, Narayanapuram, Nallanpillaiperral, Nandankalvay and Pakkam could be considered as a single cultural complex as they are all located within a radius of 3 km.


Location of Settavarai
Burthanthangal
State Map
Chennai
Villupuram
Tamil Nadu
Pakkam
Pakkam - Carparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Nallan Pillaipetrral
KILPENNATHUR
Nandankalvay
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Devadanampettai
District Map
Study Area
Gingee
Villupuram
Nallanpillaiperral
(Location of Rock-shelter)
GINGEE
Settavarai - Ayyanarmalai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Settavarai
Narayanapuram - Ranukunru
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Narayanapuram
Rajathangal
Vettavalam
VIKRAVANDI
0 0.5 1 2 kms
Legend
Rock Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
79°24'E
12°12'N
12°8'N

Map 4.9.1 Location of Settavarai complex


Location of Settavarai
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State Map
Chennai
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Tamil Nadu
Pakkam
Pakkam - Carparai
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Devadanampettai
District Map
Study Area
Gingee
Villupuram
Nallanpillaiperral
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GINGEE
Settavarai - Ayyanarmalai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Settavarai
Narayanapuram - Ranukunru
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Narayanapuram
Rajathangal
Vettavalam
VIKRAVANDI
0 0.5 1 2 kms
Legend
Rock Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 544
Low : 0
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
79°24'E
12°12'N
12°8'N

Map 4.9.2 Location of Settavarai complex

Settavarai

The paintings are found in a rock shelter near the natural pond Uttukuttai in the hillock Aiyarmalai (Fig. 4.9.1). There is another rock shelter about 60 m to the right of this rock shelter. In between these two rock shelters, there is a creek where water flows perennially providing drinking water to the local communities. Most of the paintings are animals, few fishes and human hand impressions (Fig.4.9.2). These are mostly painted in red, while white is used rarely. The paintings at Settavarai might have been painted by more than one artist in different periods. Animals include deer in large numbers as well as cows, goats, donkeys and tigers, few fishes were also observed. The figures are painted in a linear pattern and some parts were filled with colours. In general, the paintings echo the life of the hunting and pastoralist communities.

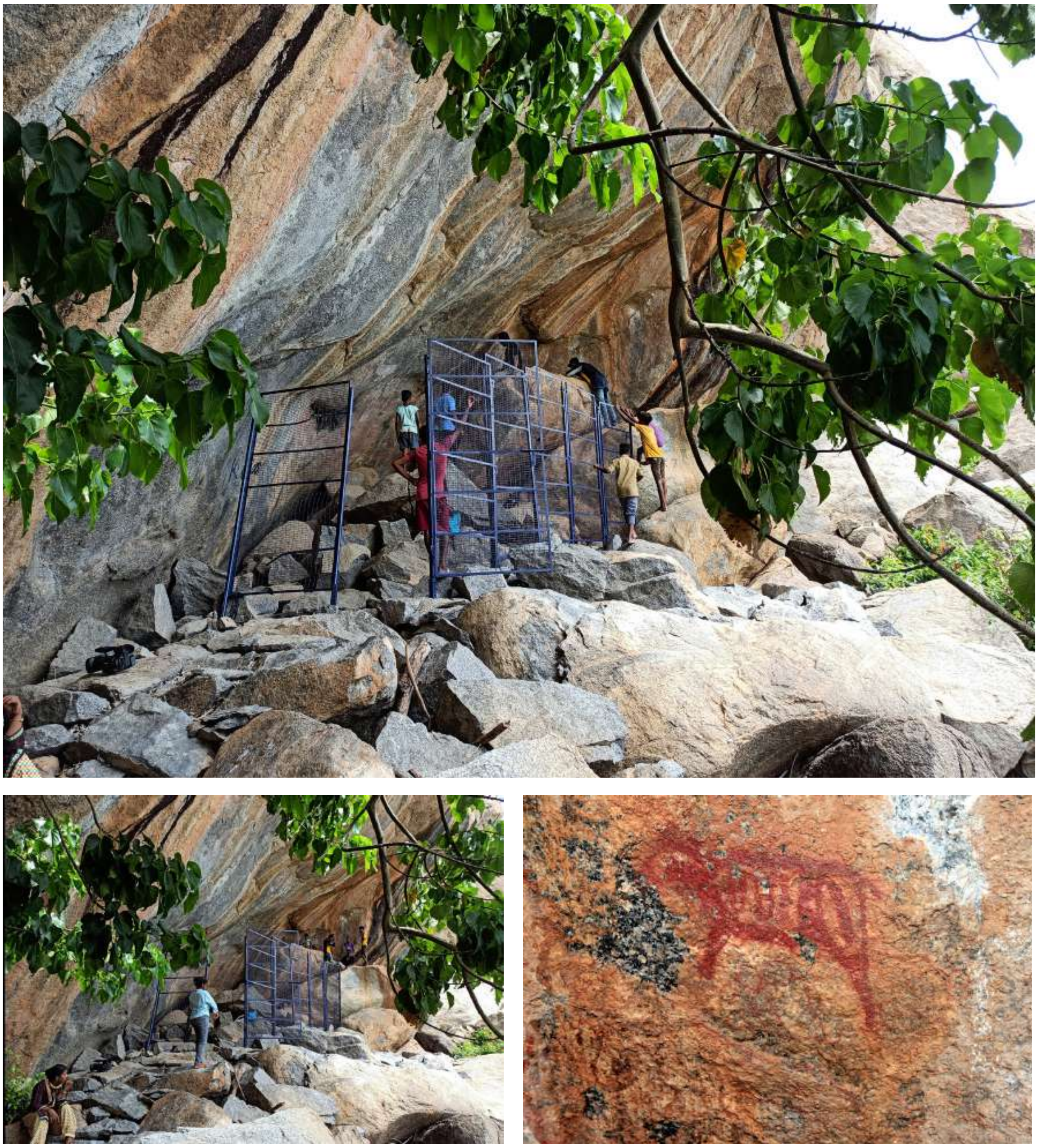


Fig. 4.9.1 Settavarai: General view of the rock-shelter

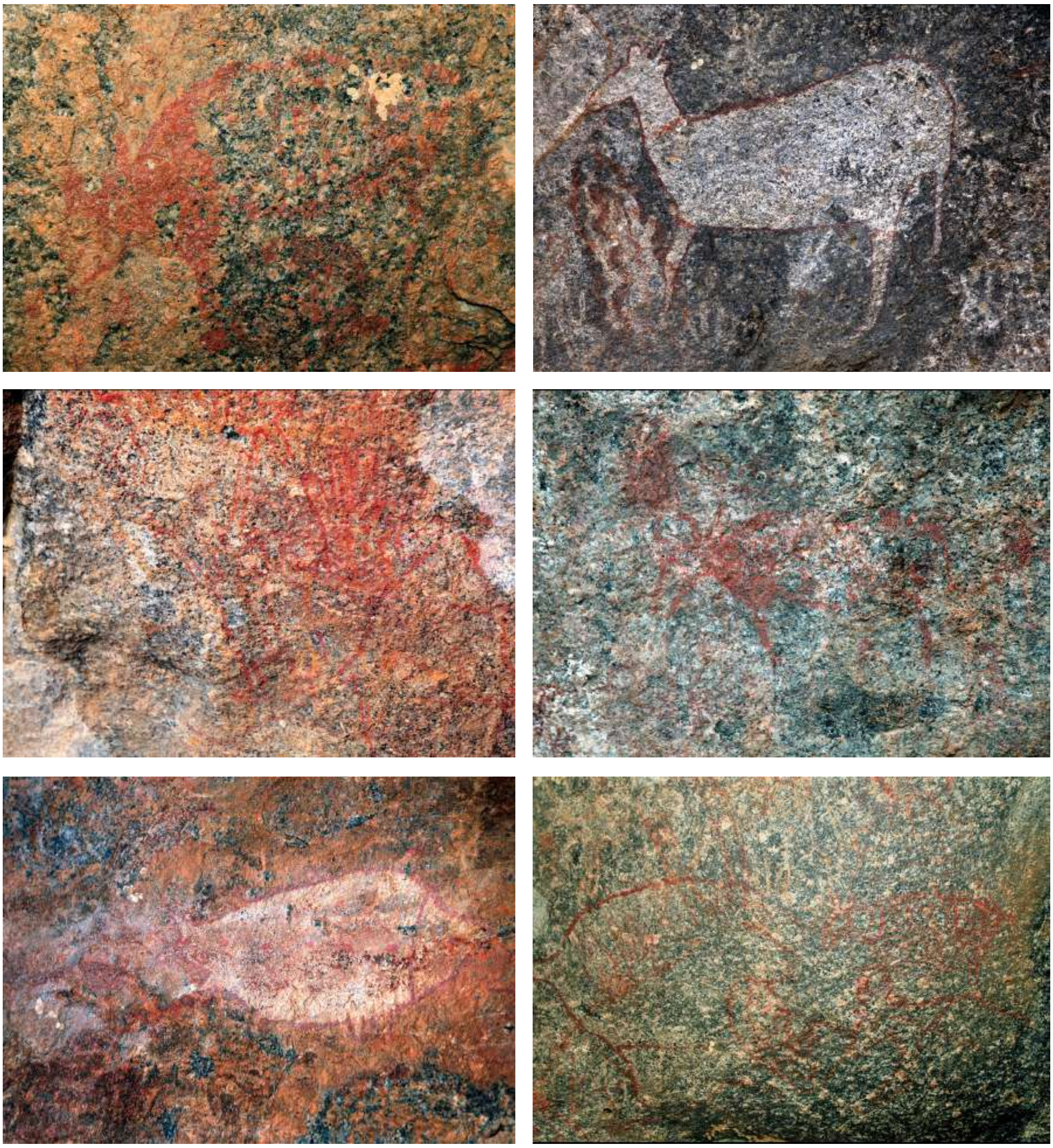
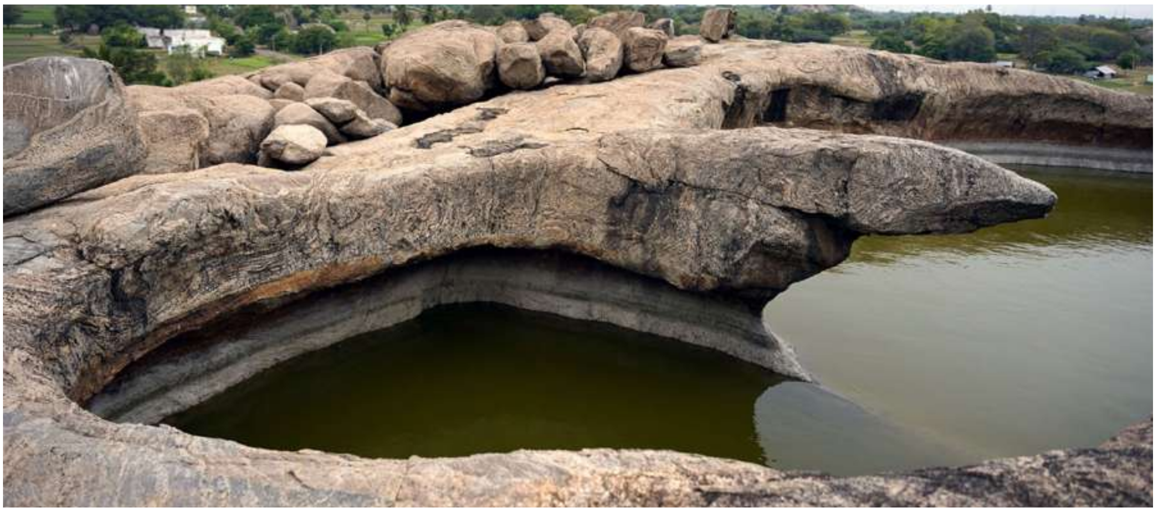


Fig. 4.9.2 Settavarai: Rock paintings

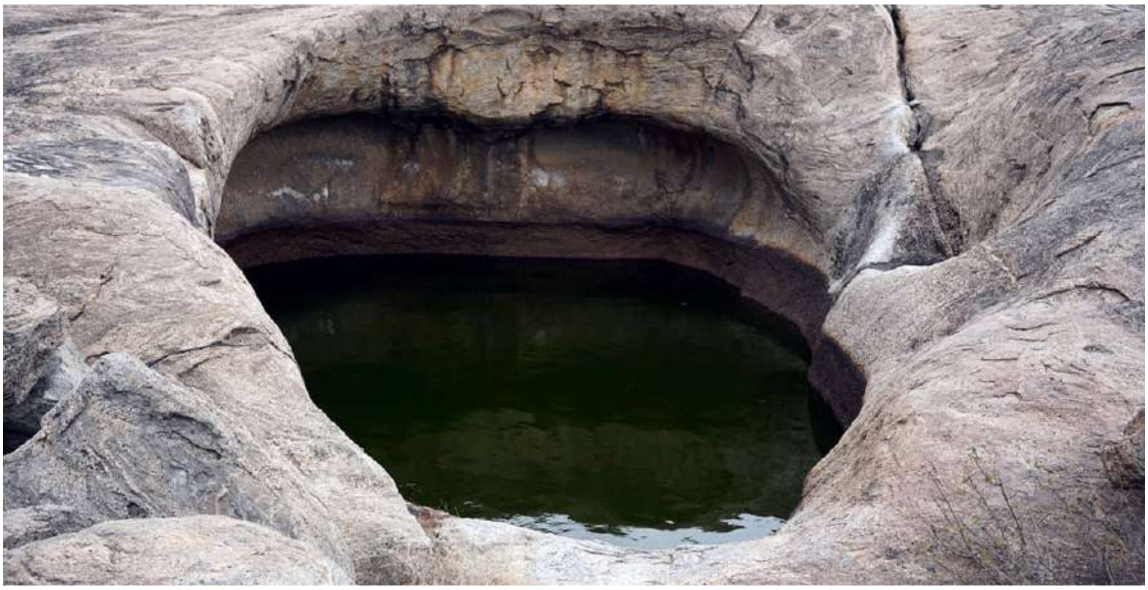
Narayanapuram

Narayanapuram (12.15770 N; 79.25137 E) lies 0.5 km away from Settavarai. More than 188 grooves used for grinding celts are noticed at the top of the hillock locally called *Ranukunru* and the grooves are called as *Rattakatteri-thadam* and also as *Kannimar-mañcal-teychcha-idam* meaning the grooves are the result of the preparation of turmeric by saptamatrikas while taking a bath in the perennial pond. The grooves are found all around the perennial ponds (Fig. 4.9.3-4.9.4).

Besides, another two groups of grooves, whick is also locally called *Kannimar-mañcal-teychcha-idam,* are found one km to the west of Narayanapuram complex of which the first group contains six grooves and the second contains 33 grooves. The rock shelter located close to six grooves has paintings both in red and white depicting three women. Nearly 20 dolmens and 6 dolmenoid cists are noticed on the hilltop called Periyamalai. The dolmenoid cists had U-shaped porthole.

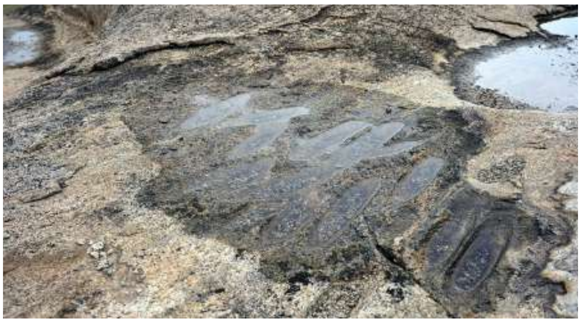


Narayanapuram (Locality - 1): General view of the perennial pond

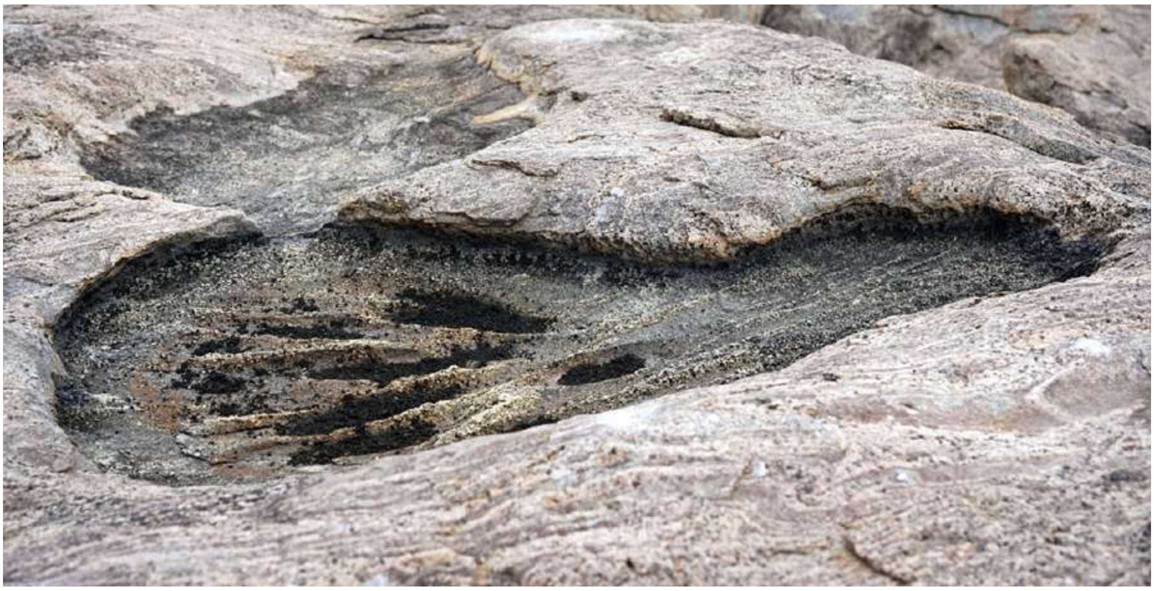


Narayanapuram (Locality - 1): close view of the perennial pond

Narayanapuram (Locality - 1):
close view of the perennial pond



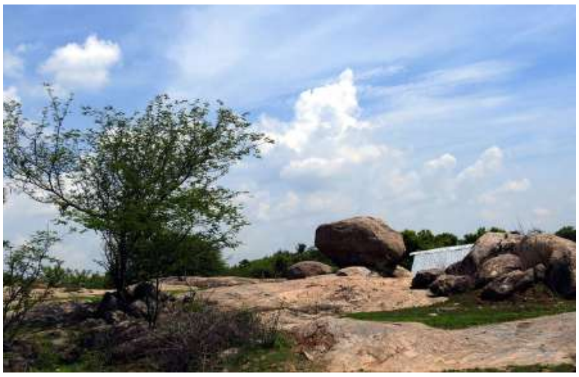
Narayanapuram (Locality - 1):
close view of neolithic polishing grooves



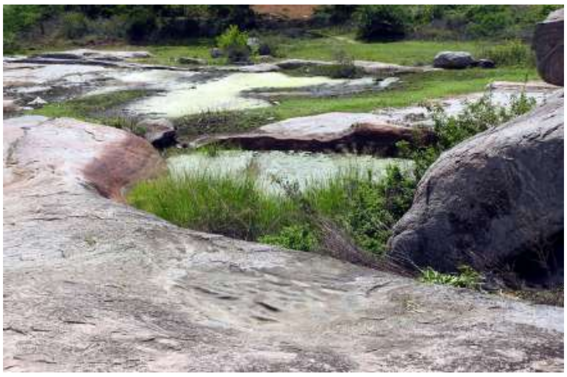
Narayanapuram (Locality - 1): close view of neolithic polishing grooves

Narayanapuram (Locality - 1): close view of polishing grooves

Narayanapuram (Locality - 1): close view of polishing grooves

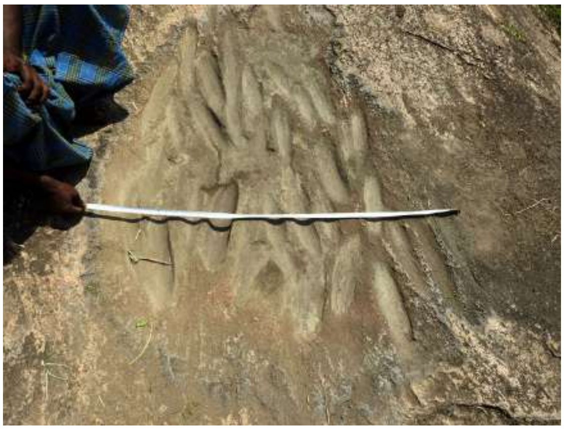


Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): Location of the polishing grooves

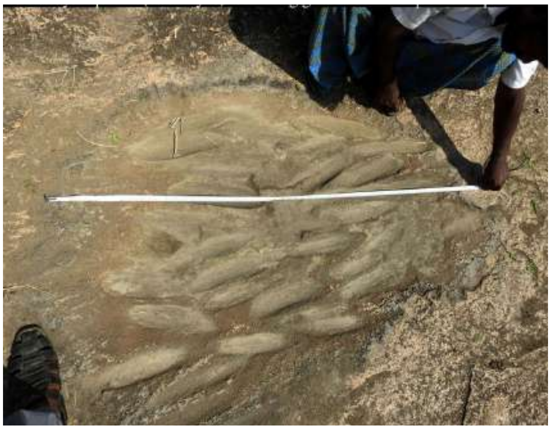


Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): polishing grooves close to pereninial pond

Fig. 4.9.3 Narayanapuram: Neolithic Grinding grooves

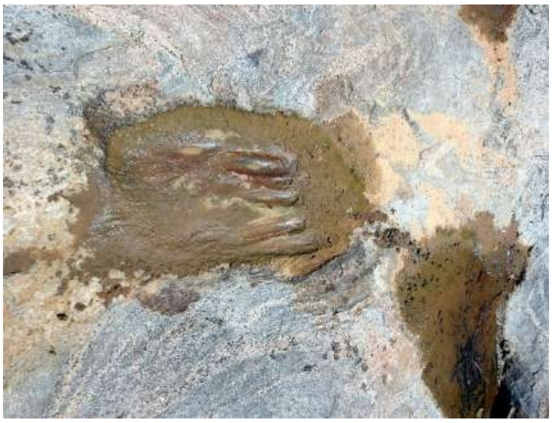


Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): Close view of the 33 polishing grooves

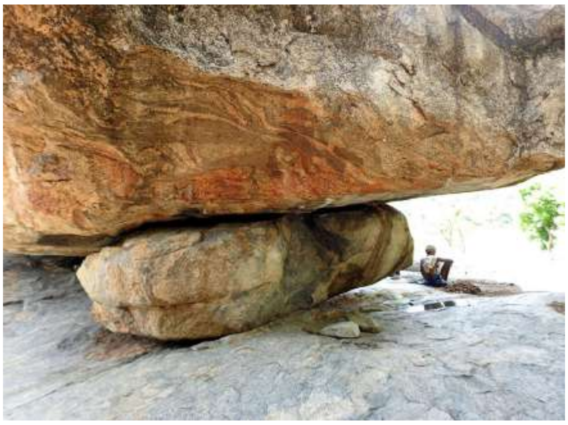


Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): Another view of the 33 polishing grooves

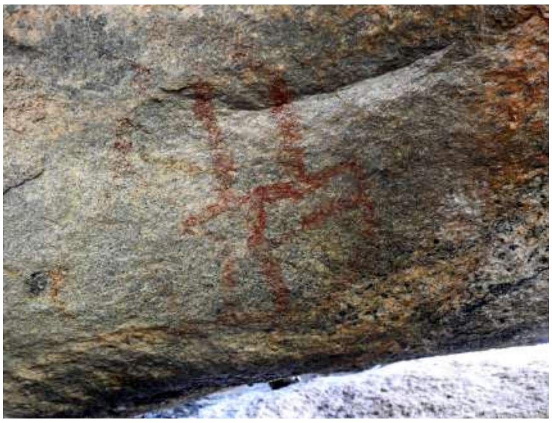
Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): Location of the six polishing grooves



Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): close view of the six polishing grooves



Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): Rockshleter with paintings



Narayanapuram (Locality - 2): Rockshleter with paintings

Fig. 4.9.4 Narayanapuram: Neolithic Grinding grooves

Pakkam

Pakkam (12.2075 N; 79.2738 E) lies on the Vettavalam -Kadaladikulam road at the distance of 23 km west of Gingee taluk of Viluppuram district. The rock art sites Settavarai, Narayanapuram, Nallanpillaiperral and Pakkam could be considered as a single complex. The famous protected rock art site Settavarai lies about 1 km away from the village in the hillock Aiyarmalai near the natural pond Uttukuttai. Nearly 20 dolmens and 6 dolmenoid cists are noticed on the hilltop called Periyamalai. The dolmenoid cists had U-shaped porthole. More than 188 grooves used for making celt are noticed on the top of the hillock locally called *Ranukunru* at Narayanapuram and the grooves are called as *Rattakaatteri thadam* and also as *Kannimar-mañcal-teychcha-idam*. The grooves are found all around the perennial ponds.

The rock shelter could be approached from Settavarai located 5.1 km northeast of Settavarai. The extensive rock shelter with brushings is found in a shelter identical to the one noticed at Perumukkal and Edakkal. There are 18 neolithic grooves similar to one noticed at Narayanapuram which is observed close to the rock shelter around a perennial pond.

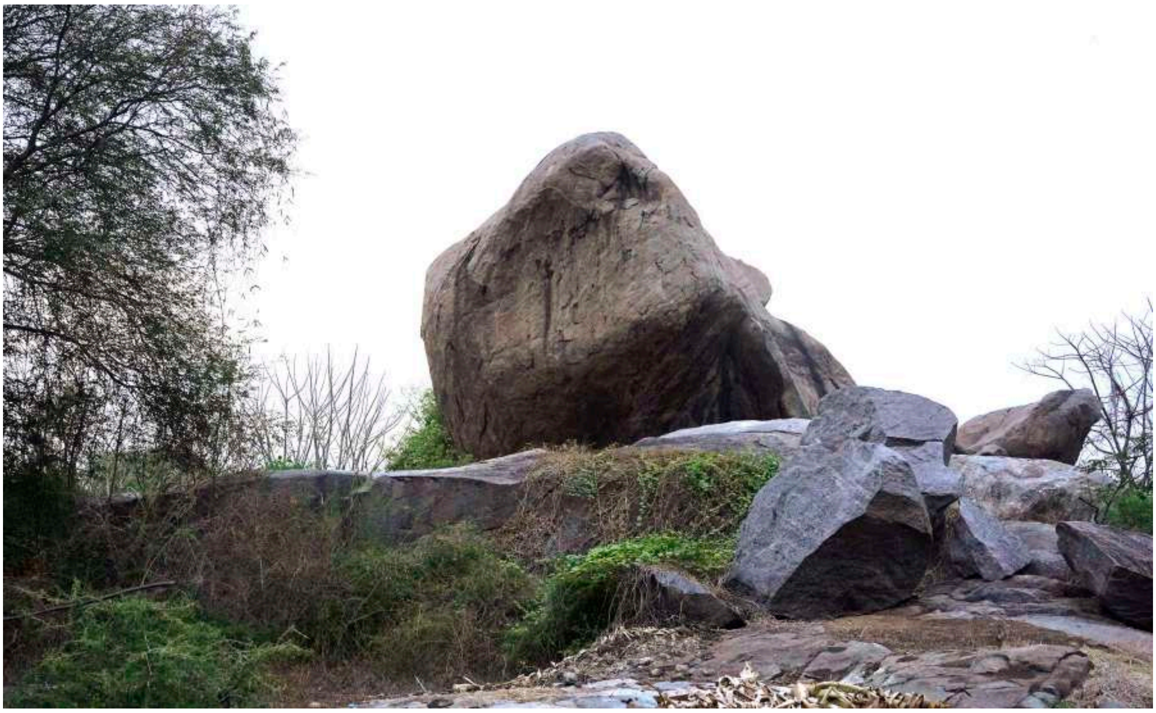
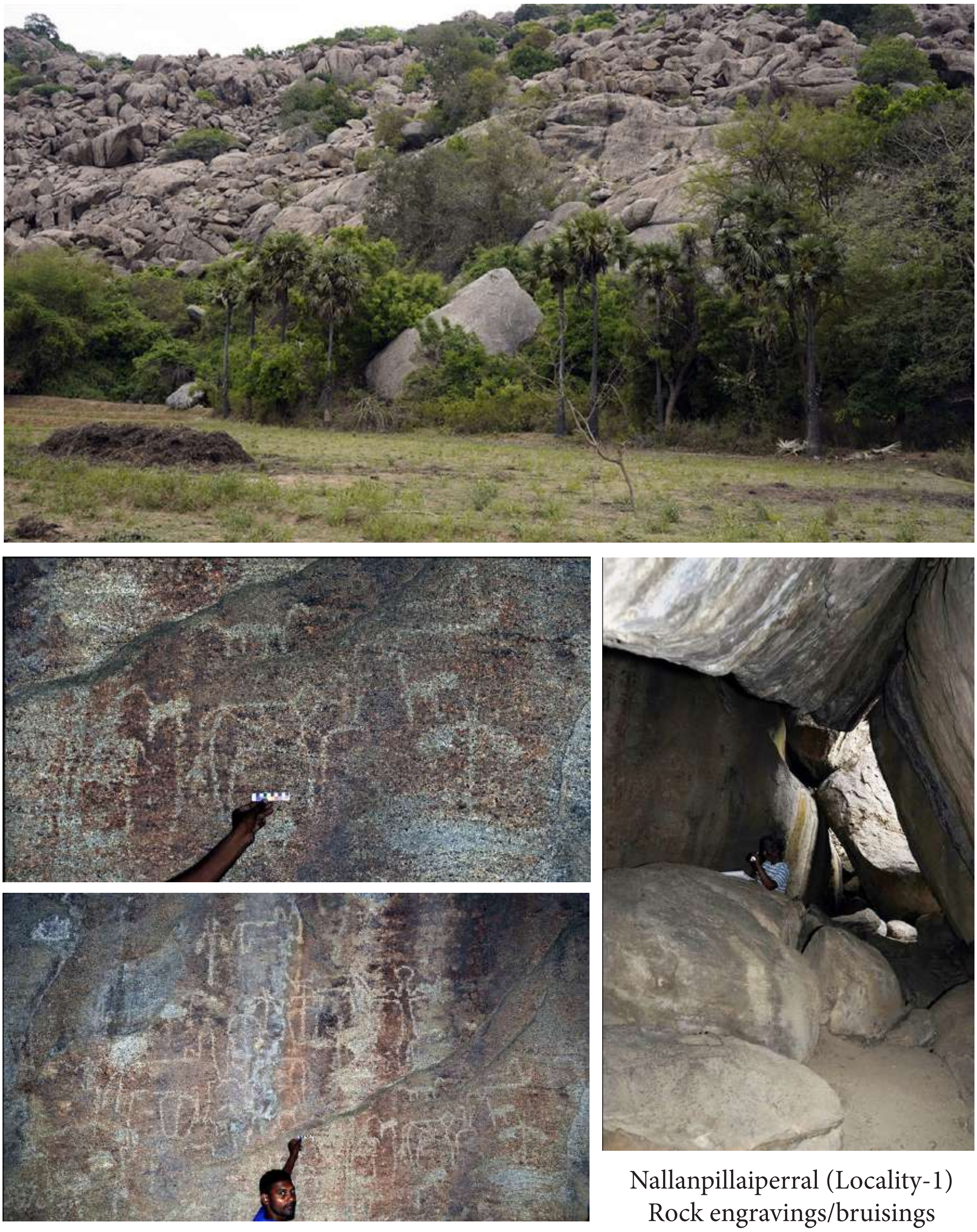


Fig. 4.9.5 Pakkam: General view of the Pakkam

The rock shelter locally called *Carparai* is located on the western side of the road called Nandankalvay road (Fig. 4.9.39). The paintings were executed in red.

Nallanpillaiperral

Nallanpillaiperral (12.18633 N; 79.26131 E) lies 1 km away from the Settavarai village. This rock shelter could be approached from 2 km northeast of Settavarai. The

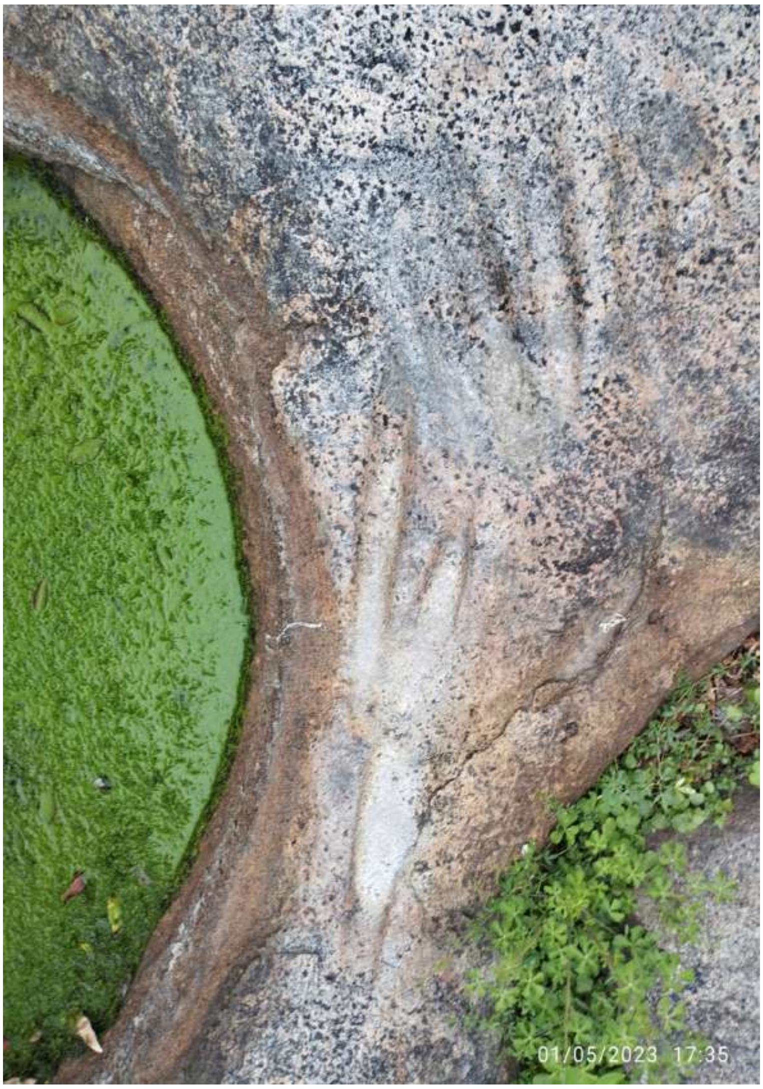


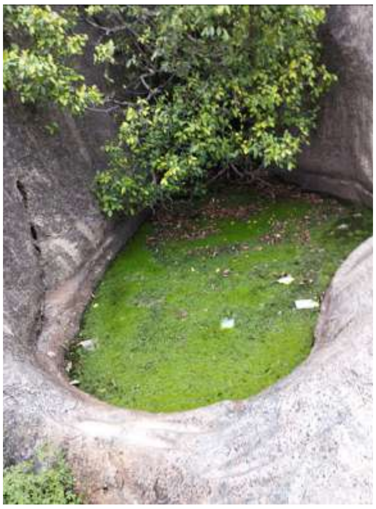
Nallanpillaiperral (Locality-1)
Rock engravings/bruisings

Fig. 4.9.6 Nallanpillaiperral: Rock engravings

extensive rock shelter with brushings is found in a shelter identical to the one noticed at Perumukkal and Edakkal (Figs. 4.9.6-4.9.7).

The entire episode reflects the agro-pastoral life. Most of the figures represent humped-bulls all facing right and human figurines. One of the bulls is decorated around the hump and all-around animals are depicted on a small scale. Besides, there is a perennial pond close to the rock shelter, with grinding grooves. There are 18 Neolithic grooves observed close to the rock shelter around a perennial pond.





Nallapillaiperral (Locality-1)
Neolithic Polishing grooves

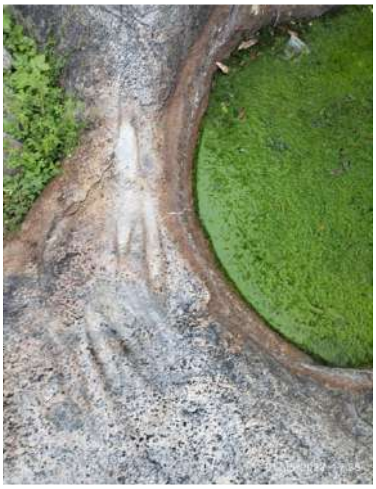


Fig. 4.9.7 Nallanpillaiperral: Neolithic grinding grooves

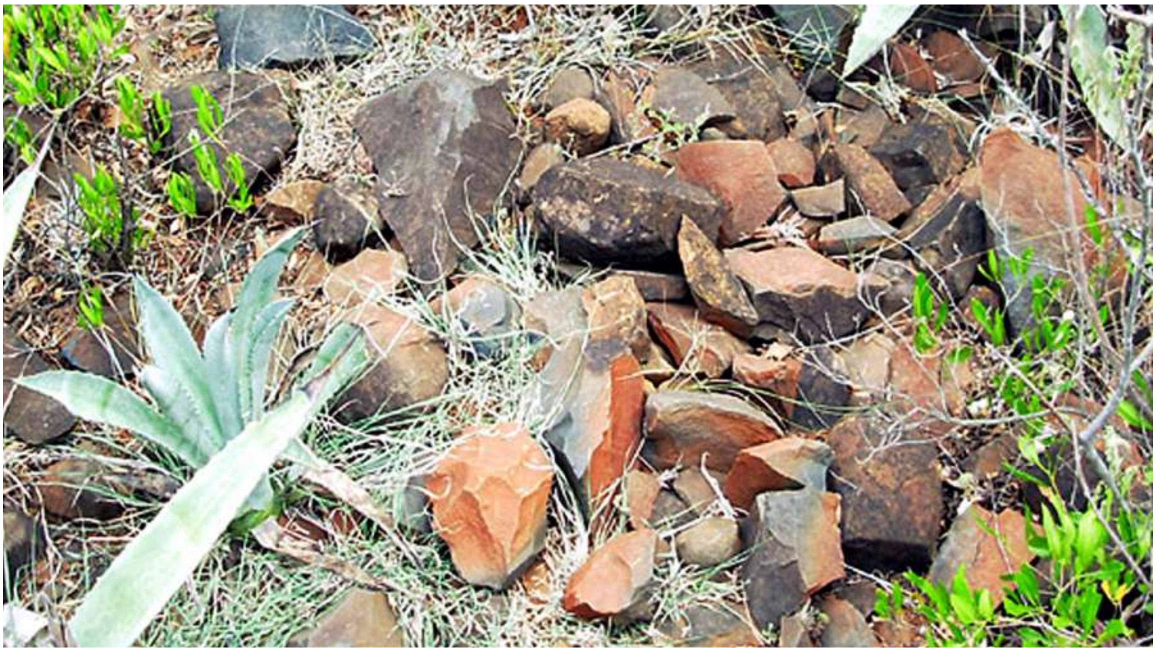
Nandankalvay

Another rock shelter is located to the northeast of the village close to the Nandankalvay (12.18508 N; 79.25142 E). The paintings were executed both in red and white. There are two fish figures of which one is prominent, painted with red ochre. The white paintings contain circles with plus marks and a human figure. The rock paintings, rock engravings, polishing grooves and dolmens found in close proximity indicate that various agro-pastoral communities were living together and following their rituals at the designated places.

Discussion

Identification of Celt Manufacturing Sites

The celt manufacturing sites represent early stages of knapping as reported earlier in the Varattanapalli, Kappalavadi and Bargur hill complex (Foote 1916; Rajan et al. 2009; Narasimaiah 1980; Paranthaman et al. 2020, Paranthaman 2019). These have been variously reported as Middle Palaeolithic or Neolithic sites by different scholars, thus resulting in some confusion as regards their cultural attribution. In order to resolve the chronological affiliation of these sites, field surveys were undertaken focusing on the sites with grooves, engravings, brushings and paintings. The presence of early stages of celt manufacture is reported at Varttanapalli and Kappalavadi in Krishnagiri district (Fig. 4.9.8). Similar production centres were reported at Sanganakallu (Brumm et al. 2007) in Karnataka or at Neolithic sites in Odisha (Behera et al. 2020). The sites are located on dolerite dykes that constitute a primary raw material source for post-Palaeolithic industries. At Kappalavadi artefacts were noted in the context of a regolith, derived from the underlying dolerite dyke that occurs cutting through gneiss. An extensive spread of artefacts along with angular debris, slabs, rolled cobbles and pebble-sized stones are noted extending over the entire region. The knapping celts noticed at Kappalavadi and Varattanapalli are well studied (Kumar et al. 2022). Such



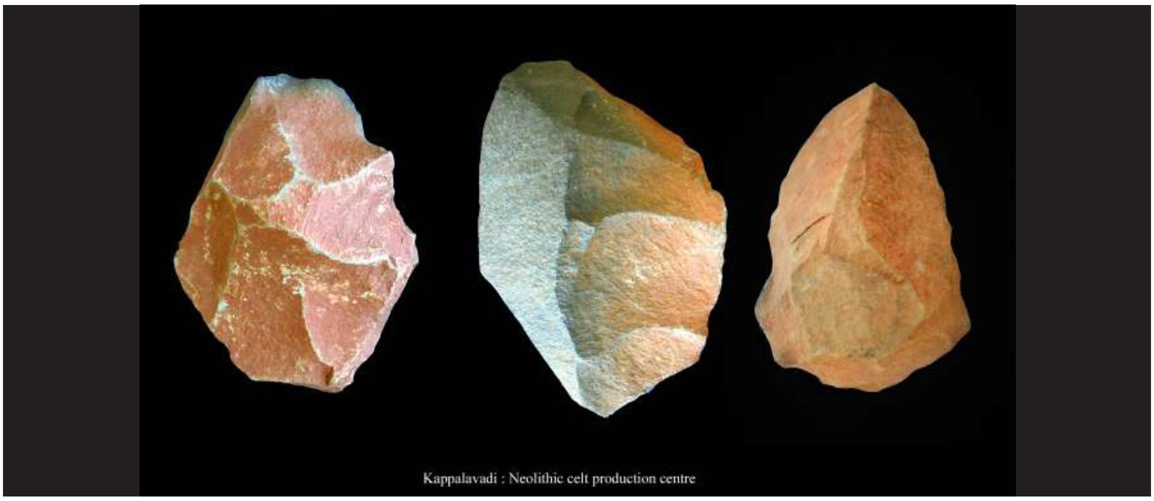


Fig. 4.9.8 Kappalavadi: Neolithic tool production centre

grinding localities were reported earlier at the sites of Attipallam and Mayiladumparai in Dharmapuri region and Pathari, Yelasunai and Nachamalai in Javadi hills (Rajan 2004; Subramanian 2016; Paranthaman 2020; Ramesh 2019; Umapathi 2016). All the sites were invariably located close to the water bodies and majority of them are found on the fringes of the perennial ponds and a few were reported close to the streams, as one observed at Attipallam near the stream Gundukottaipallam. The location of the grinding grooves around perennial ponds indirectly indicates that the water bodies played a crucial role in pecking, polishing and polishing the Celts.

Habitation Sites

As stated above, all the knapping sites fail to observe with any neolithic settlements. In contrast to this, all the sites having polishing grooves met with neolithic settlements. The finest example could be seen at Mayiladumparai and Settavarai. Both sites met with Neolithic habitation mounds, rock-shelter with engravings and paintings, Neolithic polishing grooves, Iron Age megalithic monuments, Early Historic deposits and memorial stones. The habitation site of Mallapadi (IAR1977:78:50), Paiyampalli (IAR 1964-65:22-23, IAR 1967-68:26-27) Guttur (IAR 1982-83:71-72) met with Neolithic elements along with rock paintings. The non-availability of first stage (rough-outs) of Neolithic celt production centres close to majority of Neolithic settlements indirectly indicates that the first stage of production took place at one place and they were distributed to different Neolithic communities located in approachable distance where the remaining shaping (pecking, grounding and polishing) of the Celts were taken place.

Sum-up

The present study attempts to understand the distribution of two localities where the first and second stages of Neolithic celt production has taken place. The identification of more number of knapping production centres, polishing groove sites in association with rock paintings and habitation mounds would help to understand geological and geomorphological variables in terms of site location, distance from raw material and water sources. The data gathered in the present field studies suggest that the sites such as Varattanapalli and Kappalavadi knapping production centres belong to the Neolithic period and not to the Middle Palaeolithic or pre-Neolithic periods as suggested by earlier scholars (Foote 1916, Narasimaiah 1980, Rajan et. al., 2009). Placing these sites in a definite chronological frame still eludes the scholars. The chronology of Sankanakallu could be taken till one get firm radiometric dates from these sites.

Settavarai

Panel Descriptions

The painting of this goat is very elegant and clear among other paintings depicted here. The outer edges of the goat are drawn with a line and the whole body is filled with the white colour and the outline is completed with red colour. The goat is painted with two legs visible and the other two invisible. The tail is well drawn. A fire-like thing is drawn in front of this goat. Next to it is depicted a leaf-like figure and two human hands with five fingers are very clearly drawn. Some scholars believe that this scene is a sacrifice of a hunted animal. The combination of two colours expresses the aesthetic sense of the artist (Figs. 4.9.9a-4.9.9b).

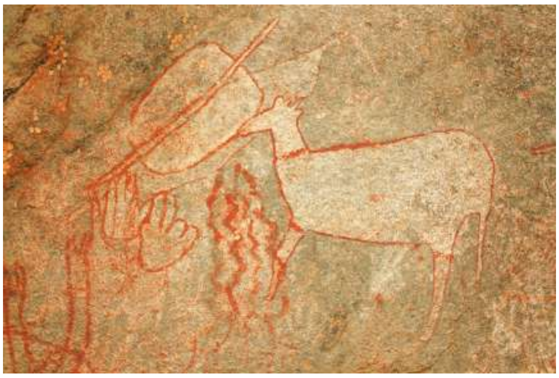


Fig. 4.9.9a Goat and hand signs

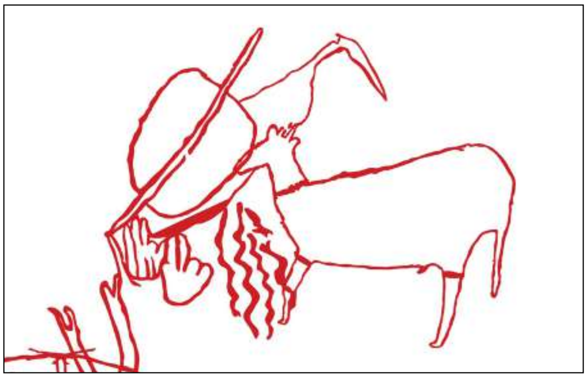


Fig. 4.9.9b Goat and hand signs

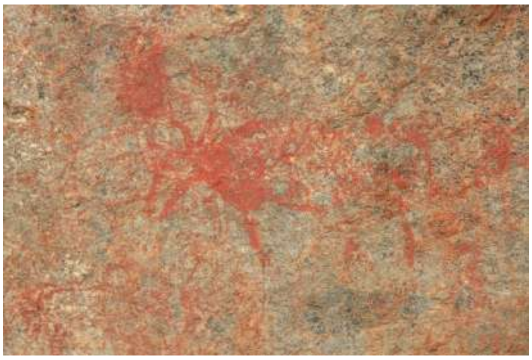


Fig. 4.9.10a Cow

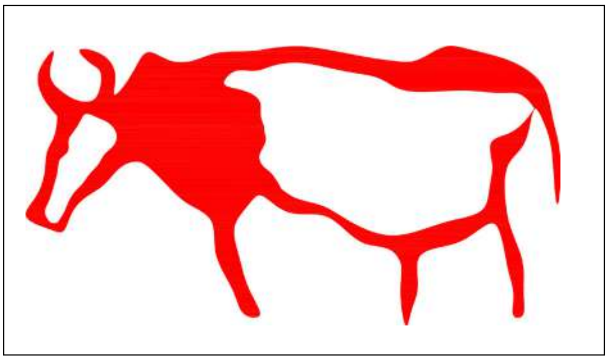


Fig. 4.9.10b Cow

The figure is a cow, drawn very clearly and elegantly painted with red colour. The head portion and two horns are very clear but the body portion is faded. The developed level of expertise is noticeable. This painting might belong to the pastoralist community (Figs. 4.9.10a-4.9.10b).

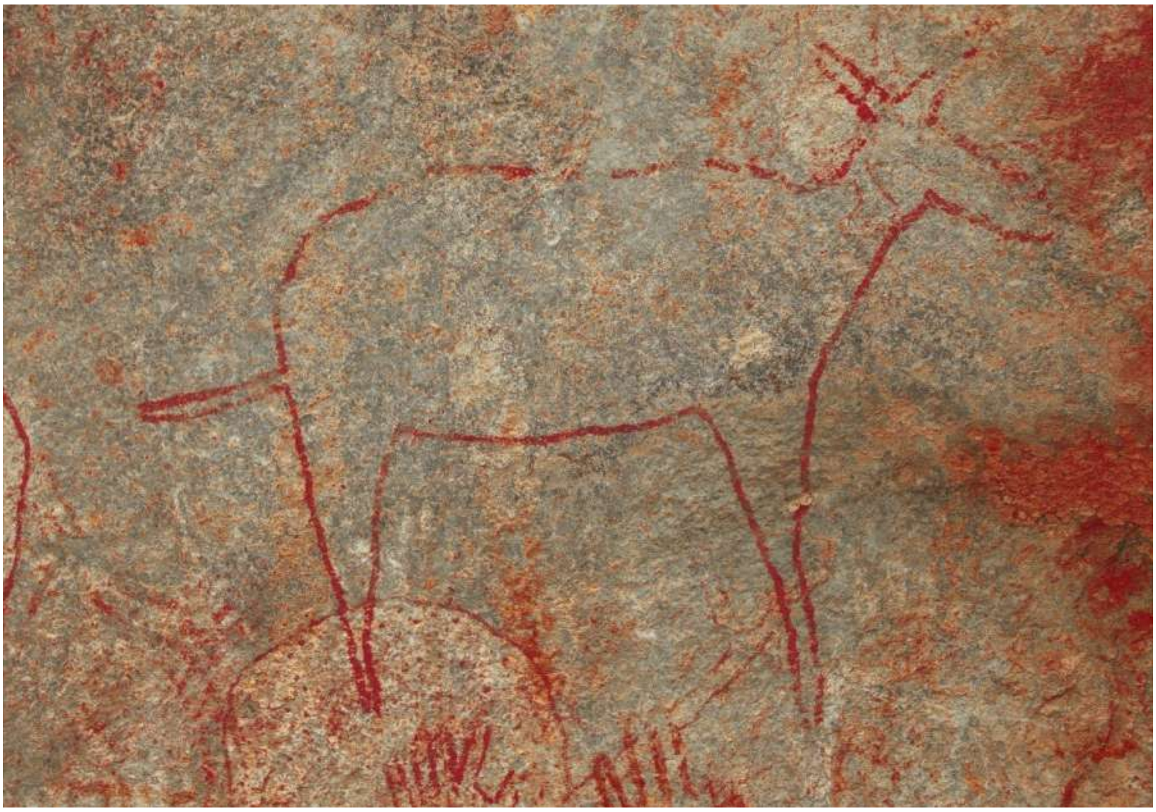


Fig. 4.9.11a Deer

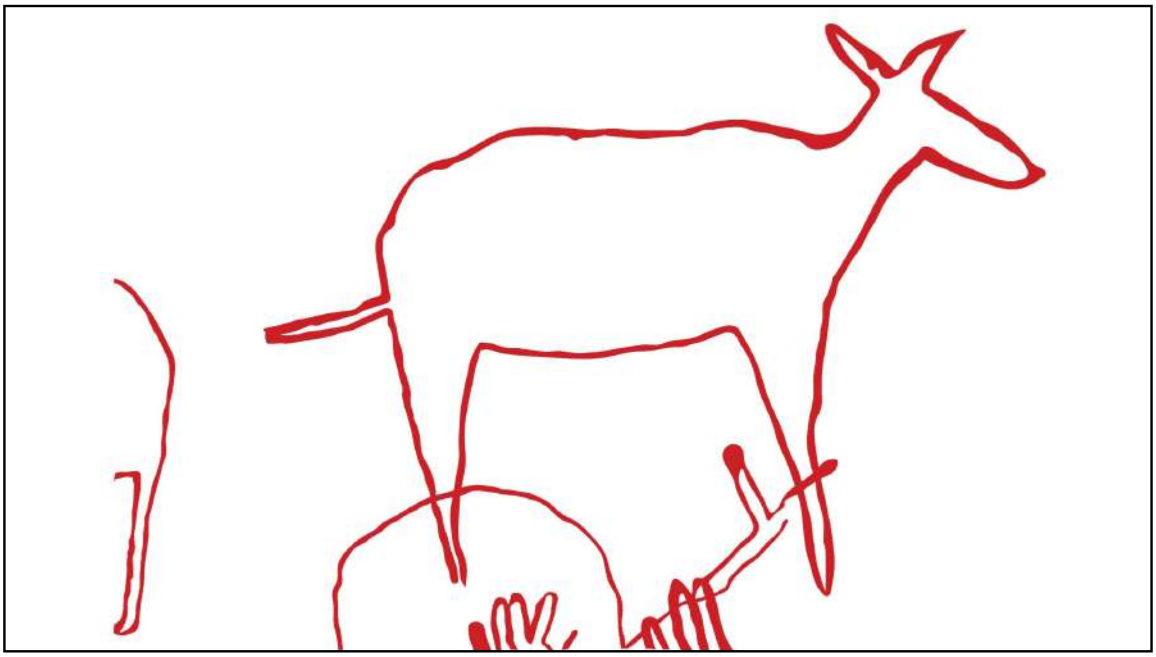


Fig. 4.9.11b Deer

The figure is a deer, drawn with very simple lines. Small, large, straight and curved lines were used according to the body structure of the deer. Two legs are only visible, the other two are hidden behind these legs. The deer is depicted in a side view and looks realistic (Figs. 4.9.11a-4.9.11b). Painted in red colour and the body portion left empty.

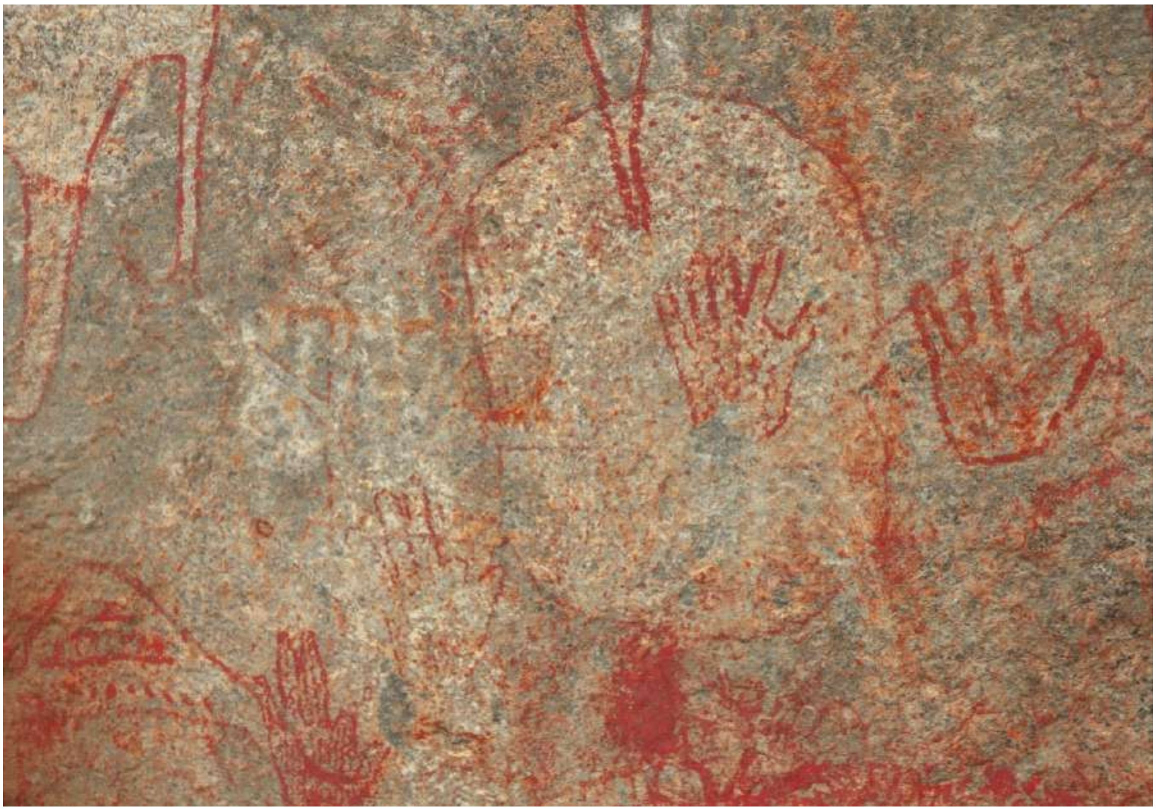


Fig. 4.9.12a Palm drawings and animal

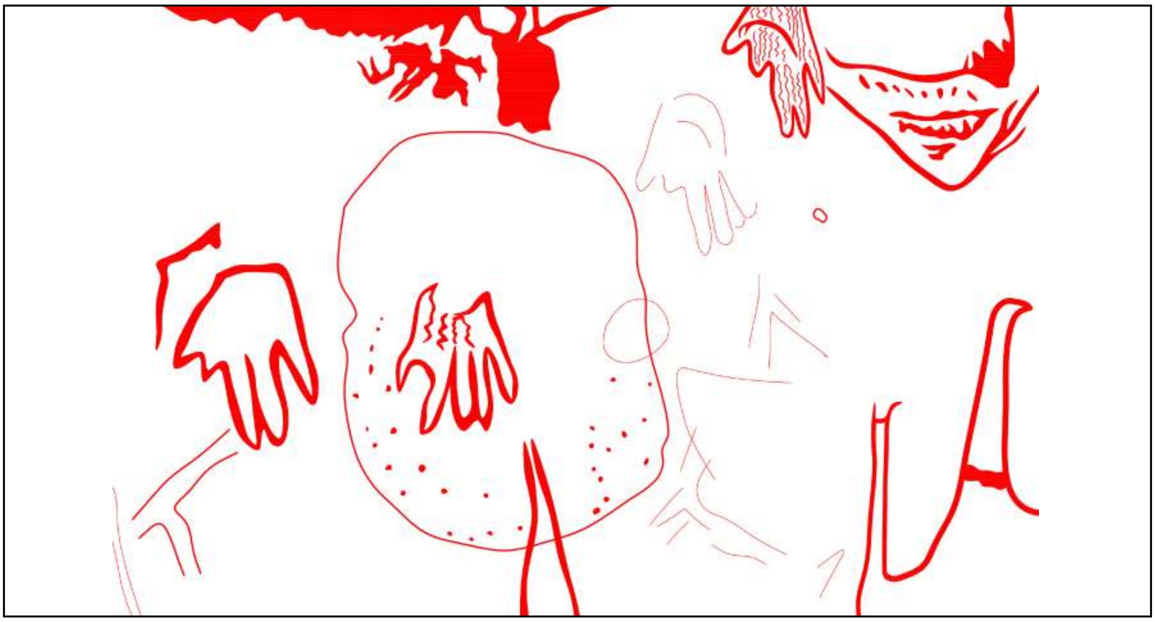


Fig. 4.9.12b Palm drawings and animal

The circular shape and geometric shape are drawn with red colour and the inner part is filled with white colour. This circular leaf-like shape is painted near the animal's foot. Furthermore, human palm impressions have also been drawn in a linear pattern. Many palm impressions are drawn here and some fingers are missing. These may be a practice of sacrificing body parts or the painter might have created them out of his imagination, but it is noteworthy (Figs. 4.9.12a-4.9.12b).

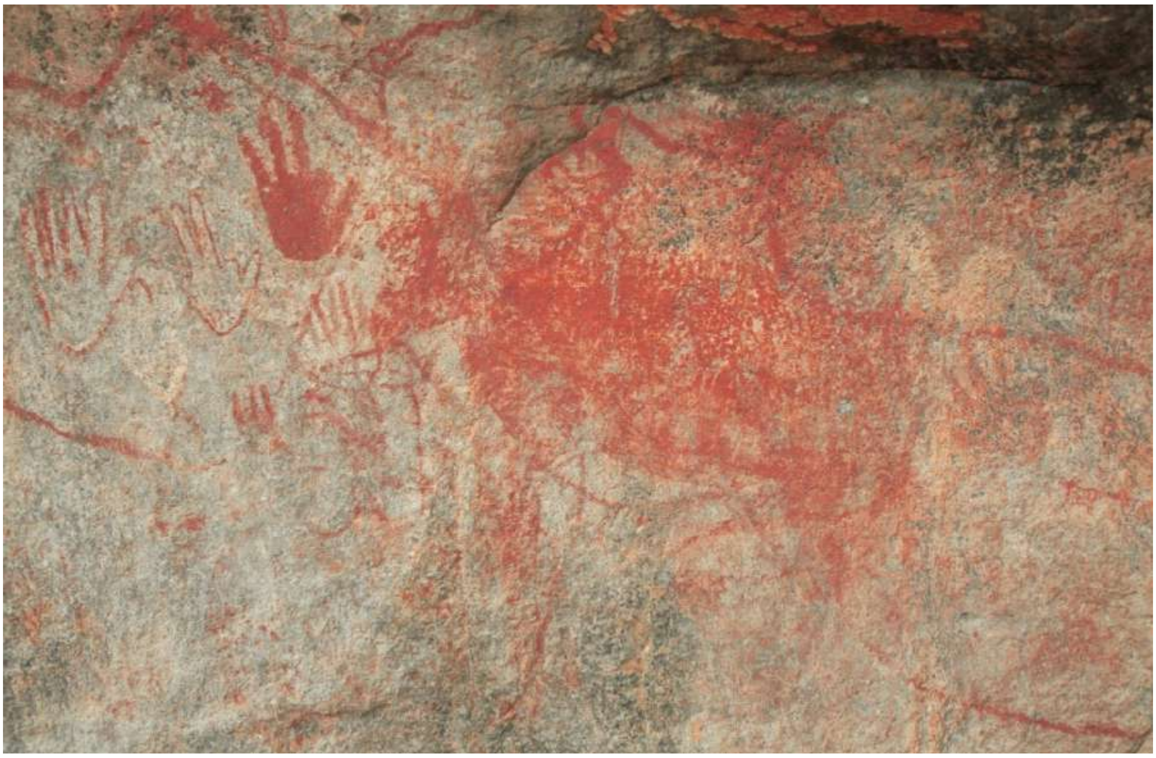


Fig. 4.9.13a Palm sign

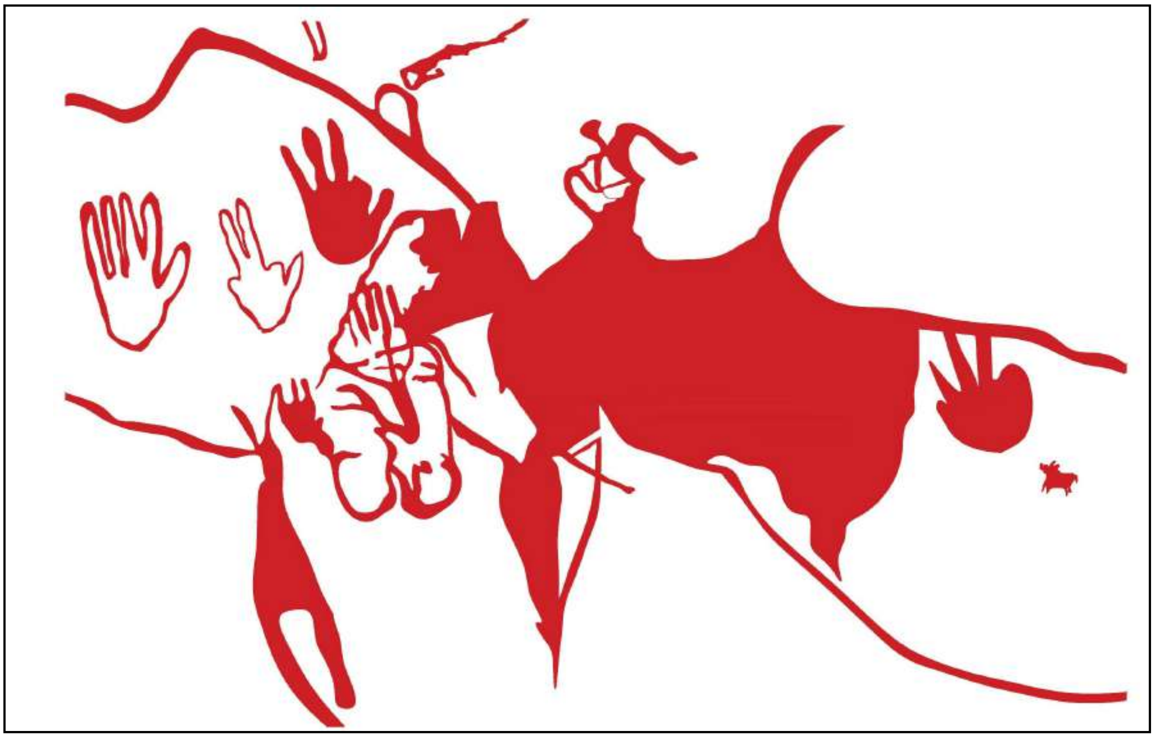


Fig. 4.9.13b Palm sign

More than ten human hand figures were drawn here. They were drawn as linear paintings as well as filled with colours in some places. Among them also some are found with missing fingers (Figs. 4.9.13a-4.9.13b).

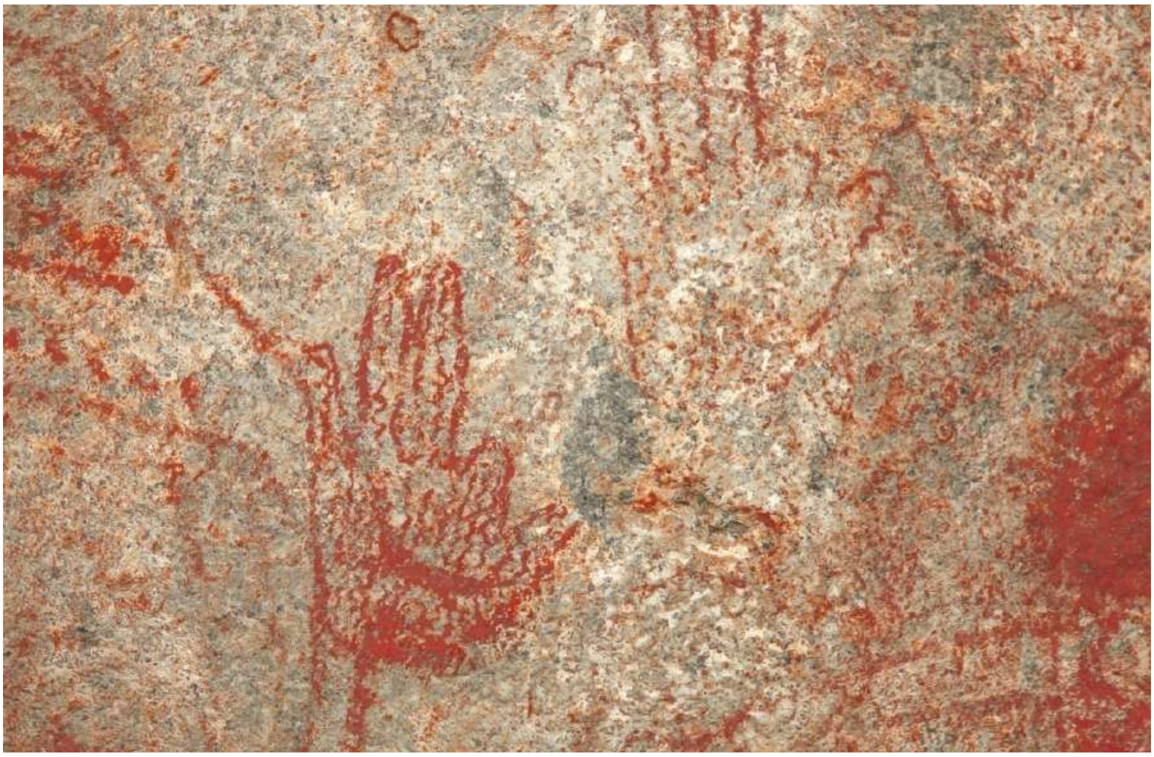


Fig. 4.9.14a Palm sign

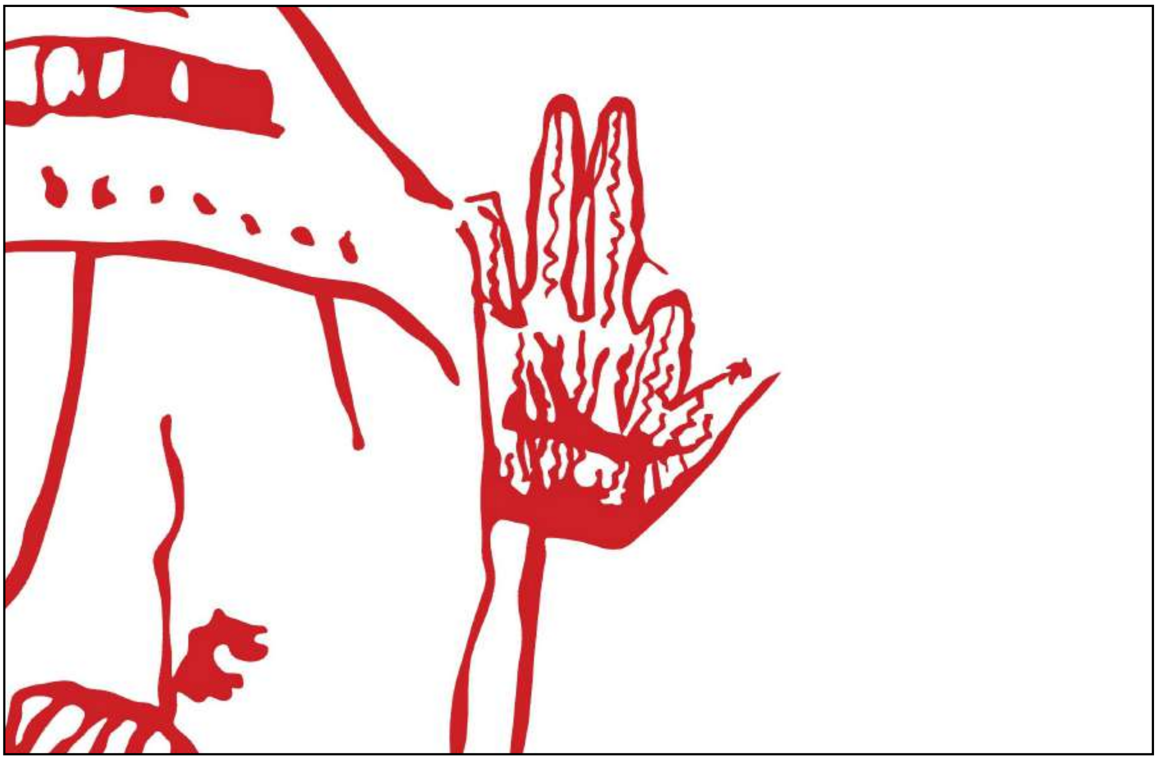


Fig. 4.9.14b Palm sign

Two human hand figures are drawn in a linear pattern. One of them is partially filled with the colour. Another is shown with outer lines. But, these hands are drawn with a missing finger (Figs. 4.9.14a-4.9.14b).

In this panel, four animals are shown in the linear style. Near them, a bird, a human hand figures and an unidentified painting can be seen. The deer is seen moving forward

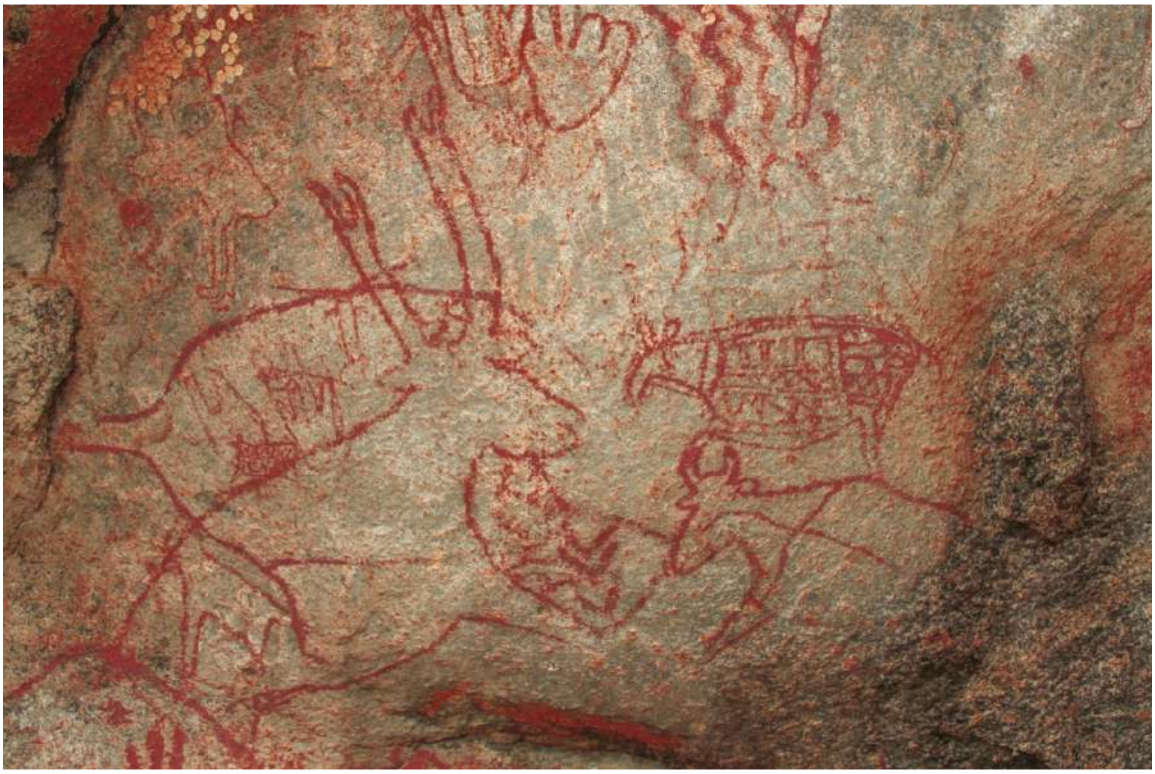


Fig. 4.9.15a Animals and palm signs

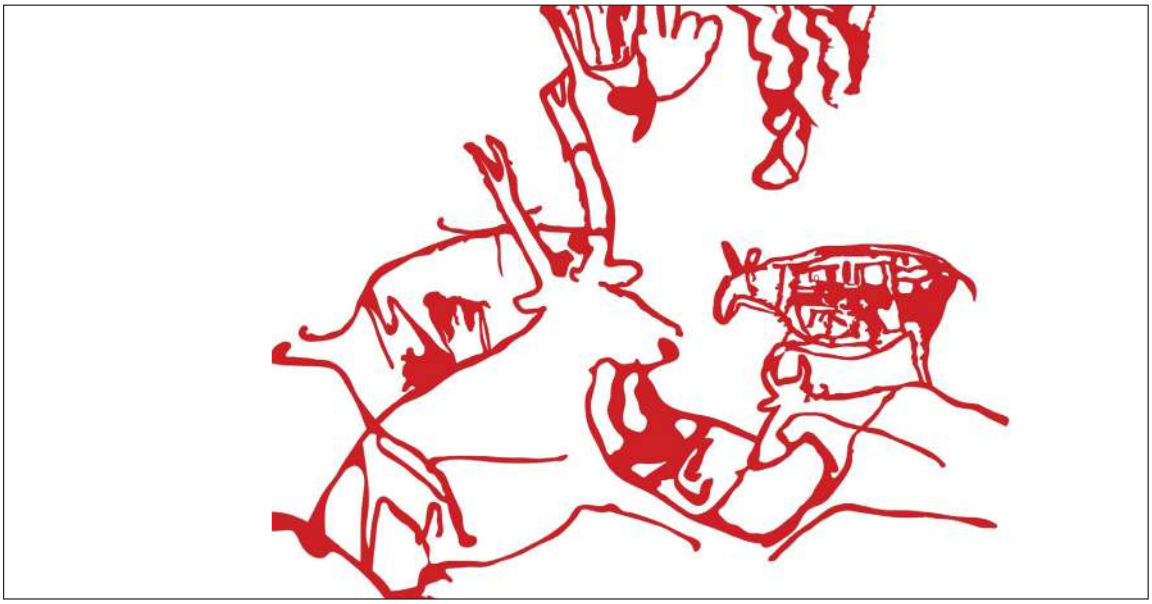
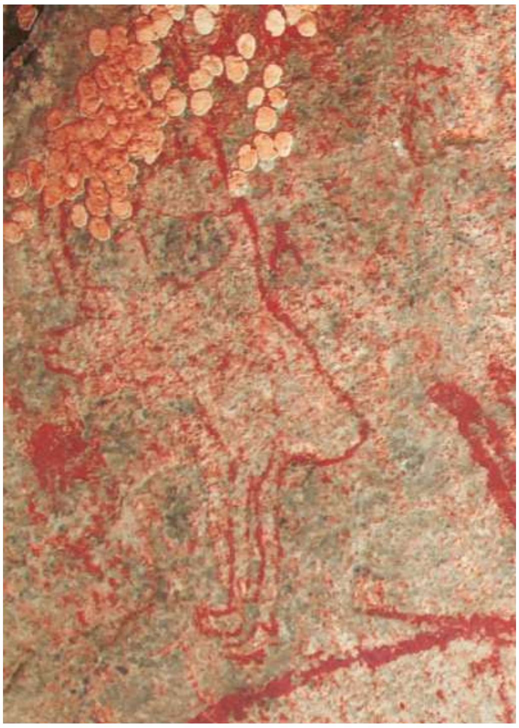


Fig. 4.9.15b Animals and palm signs

with long horns. Above this deer is a figure of another deer but its head is distorted. Opposite to this deer is a figure of a cow drawn with simple lines and an elegant physique. The body of this cow is drawn in the X-ray sketch (Figs. 4.9.15a-4.9.15b).



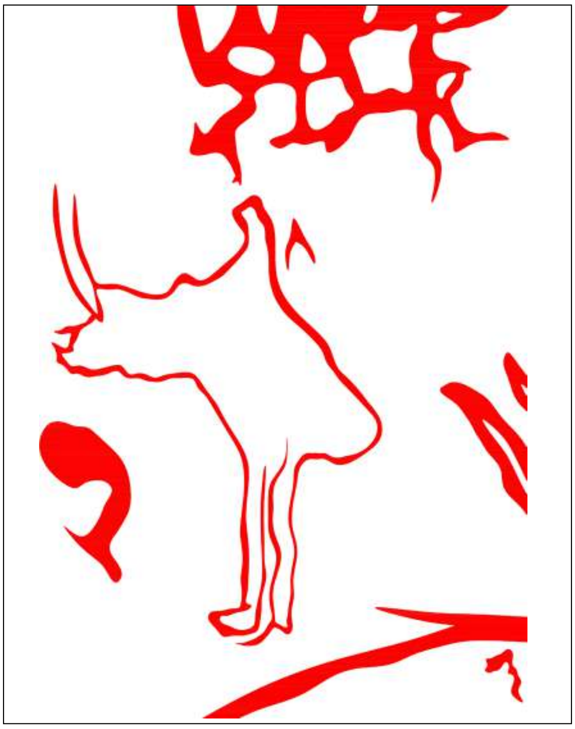


Fig. 4.9.16a Animal head

Fig. 4.9.16b Animal head

The figure of the crane-like bird. Its head is faded. Generally, bird figures are not commonly found in the rock paintings. Thus, the depiction of the bird here is important (Figs. 4.9.16a-4.9.16b).

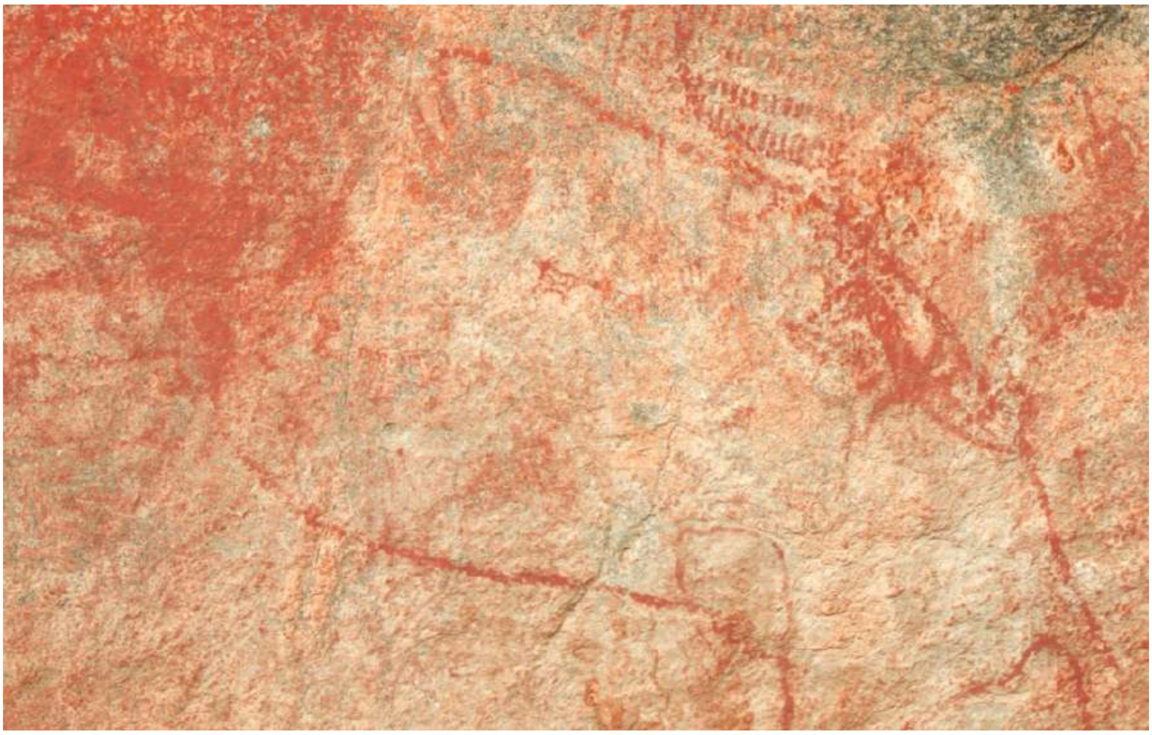


Fig. 4.9.17a Body part of an animal

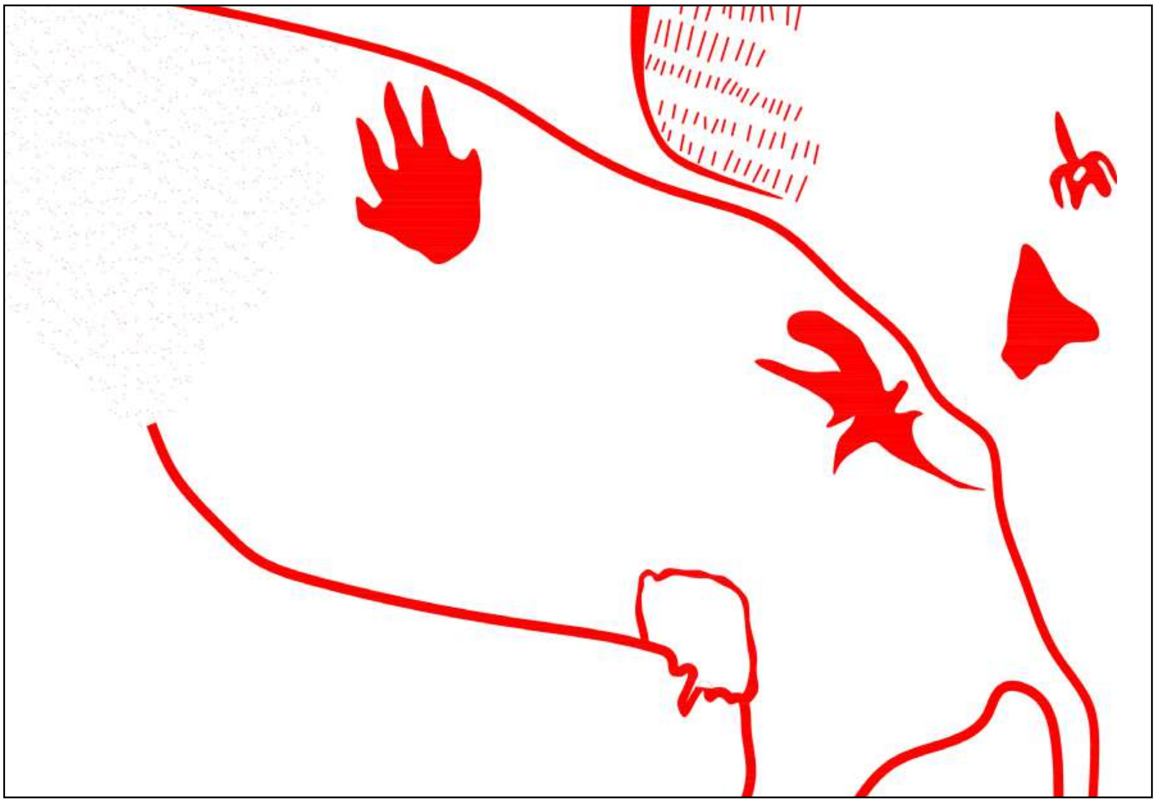


Fig. 4.9.17b Body part of an animal

This panel has a picture depicting an animal and is drawn in a linear style. Its head is faded. Within the image of this cow are some human hand figures and unrecognizable figures found in a faded condition. Above this figure is a figure of a tree with small leaves (Figs. 4.9.17a-4.9.17b).

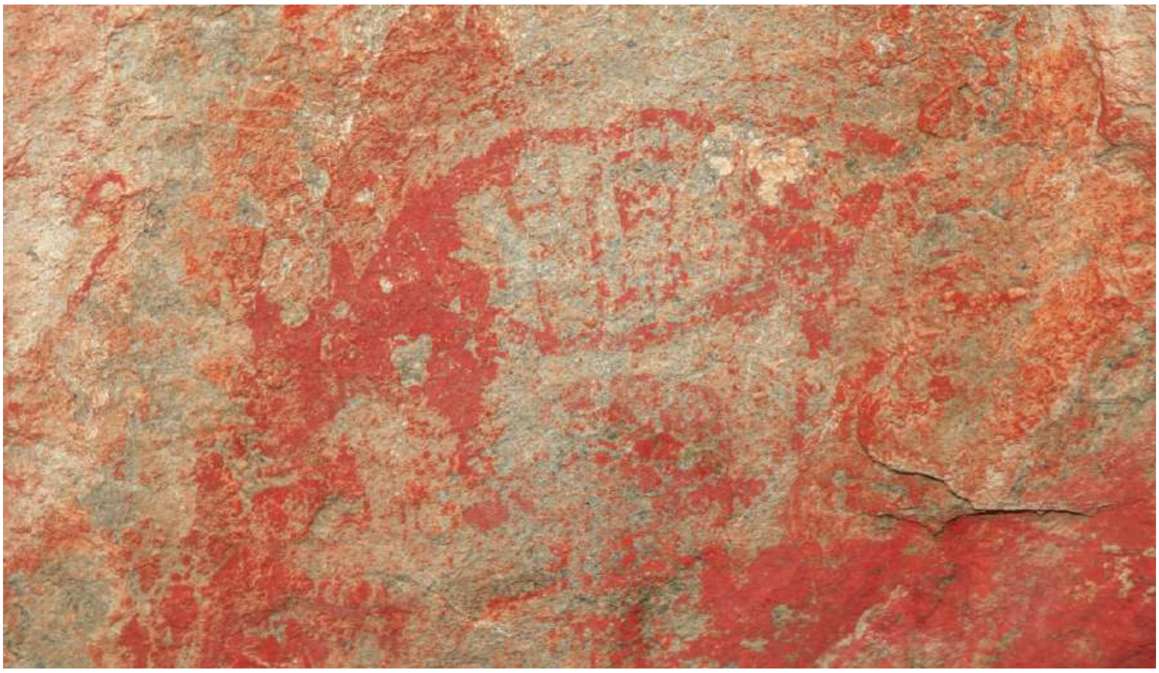


Fig. 4.9.18a X-ray form of animal

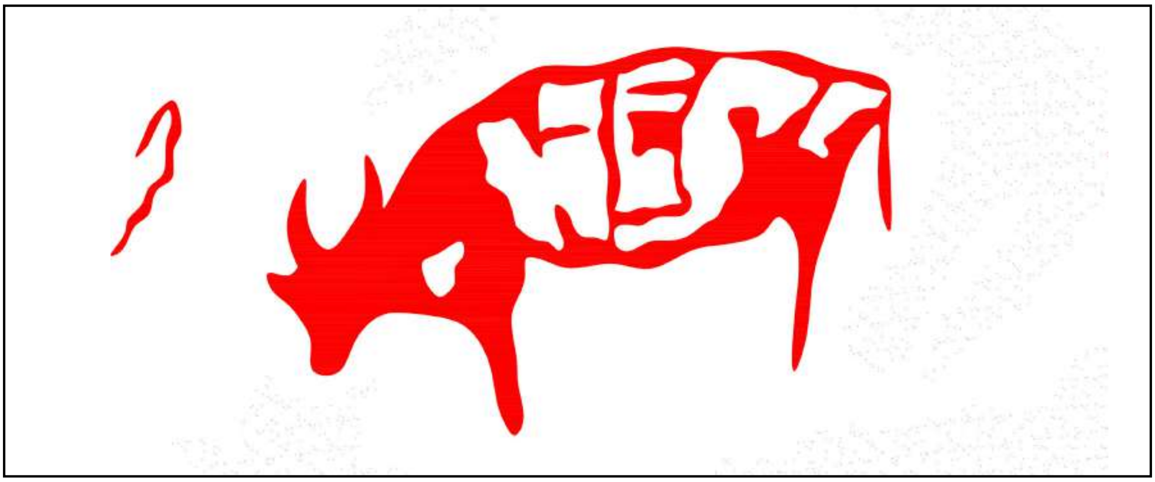


Fig. 4.9.18b X-ray form of animal

A cow is drawn in this panel. Here, the cow is drawn in a linear pattern and then the colour is filled in the neck and middle portion. The decorative lines on the abdomen leaving space exhibit X-ray image. (Figs. 4.9.18a-4.9.18b).

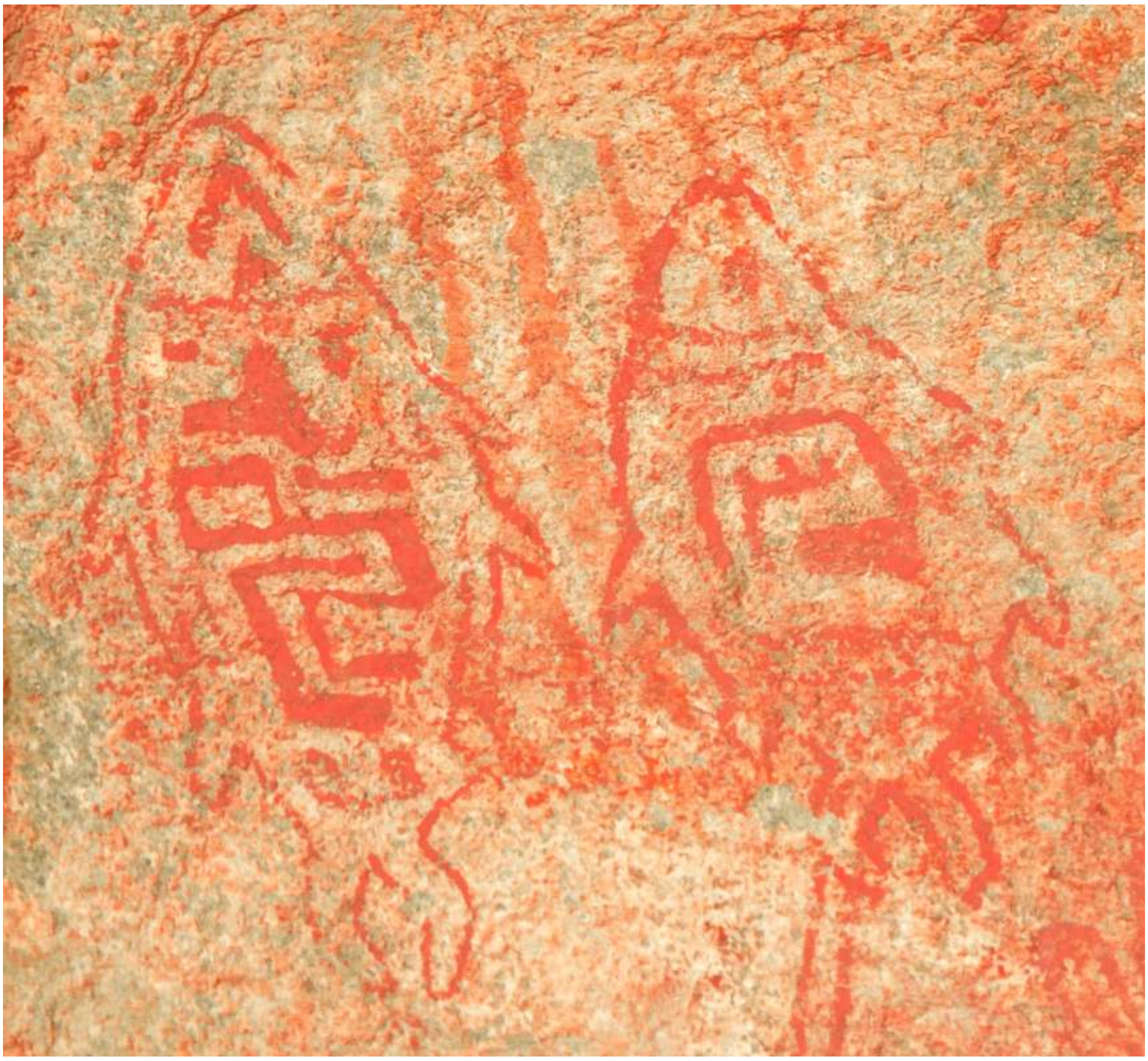


Fig. 4.9.19a X-ray form of double fish

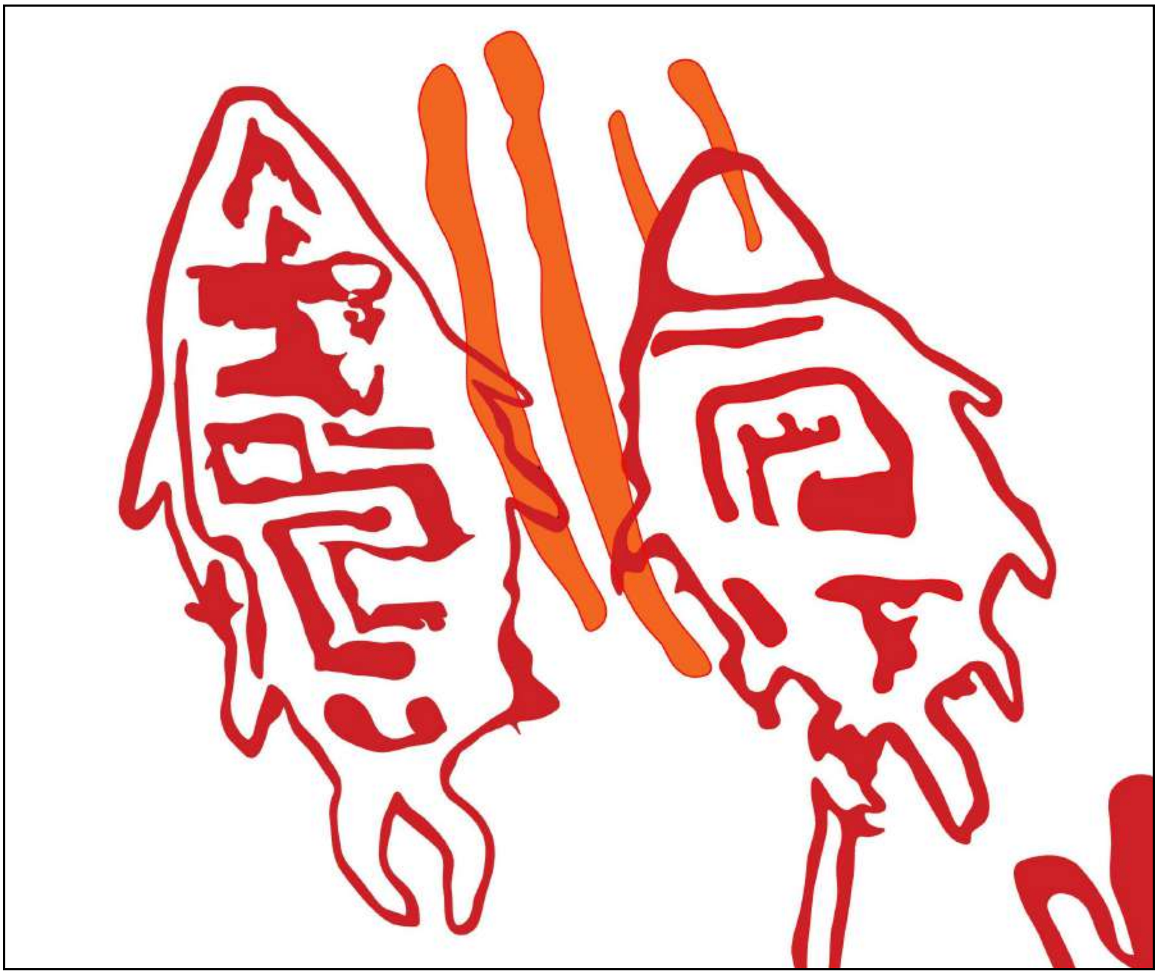


Fig. 4.9.19b X-ray form of double fish

Two fishes are drawn side by side similarly. The interior of the fish's body is filled with different shapes as in X-ray paintings. This part of the two fishes are different. (Figs. 4.9.19a-4.9.19b).

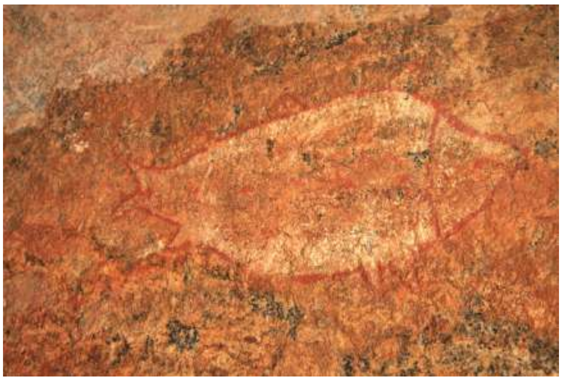


Fig. 4.9.20a Fish

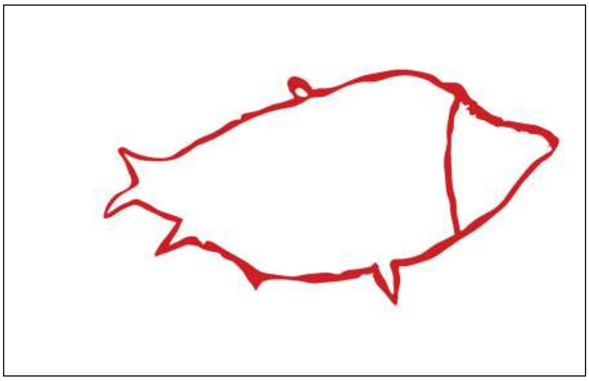


Fig. 4.9.20b Fish

A single fish is drawn horizontally. The outer lines are drawn with red colour and the inner body is filled with white pigments (Figs. 4.9.20a-4.9.20b).

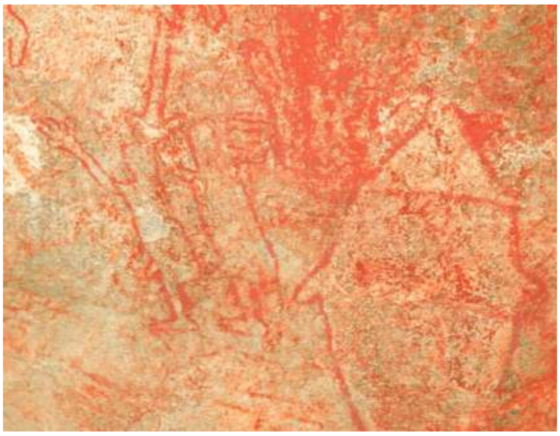


Fig. 4.9.21a Human and fish

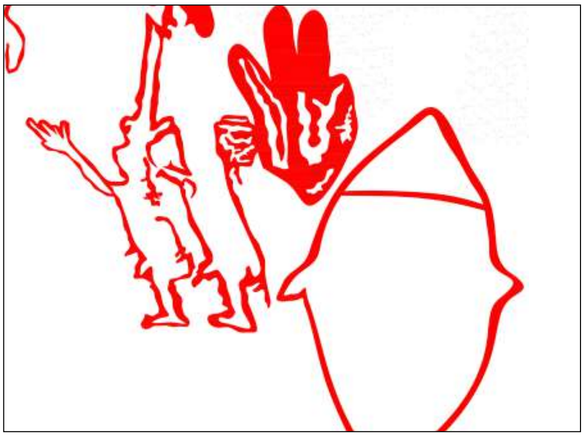


Fig. 4.9.21b Human and fish

The fish figure is drawn in white and then completed with red stripes. Near this fish, two human figures are also drawn in a linear pattern. Both human figures are shown with the hand raised (Figs. 4.9.21a-4.9.21b).

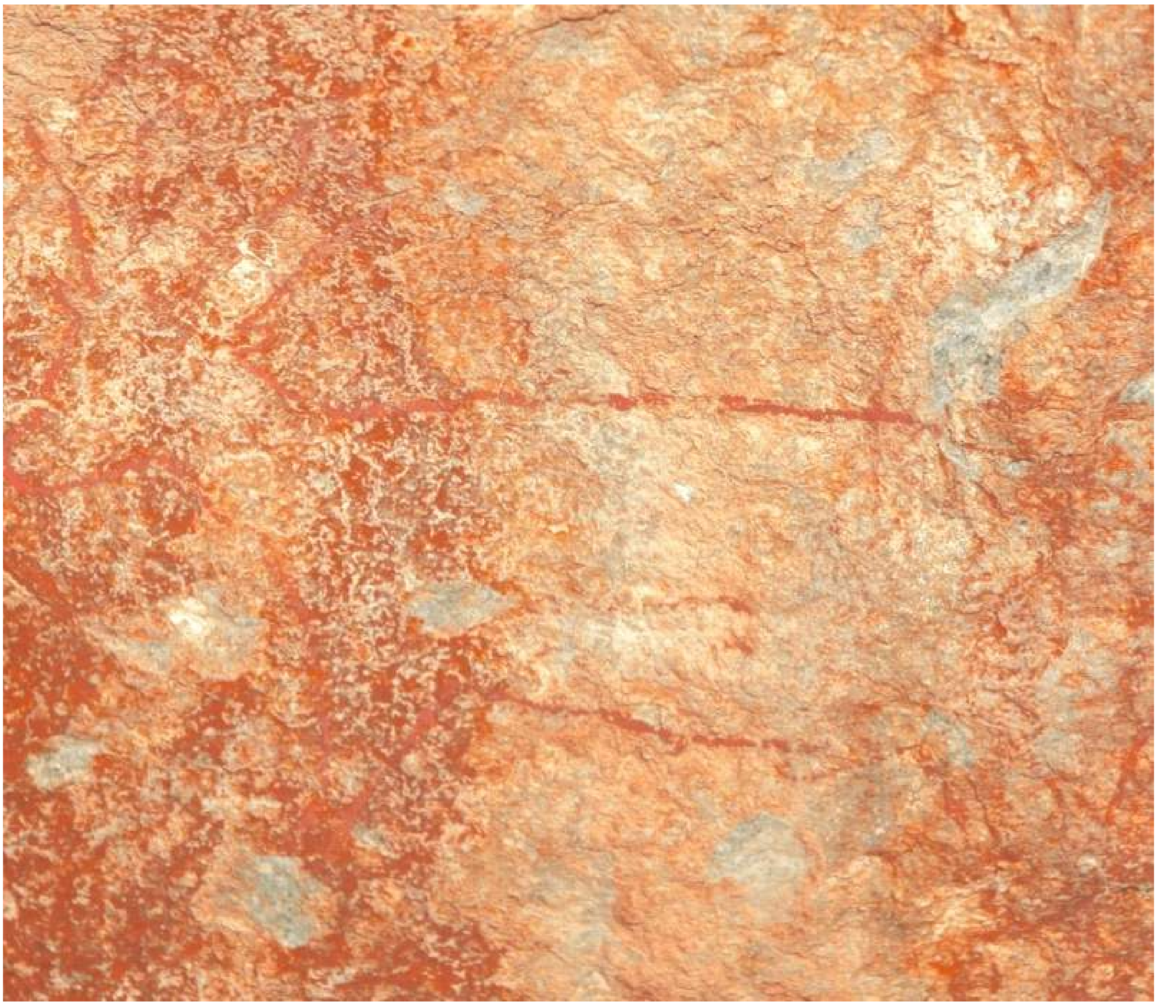


Fig. 4.9.22a Deer

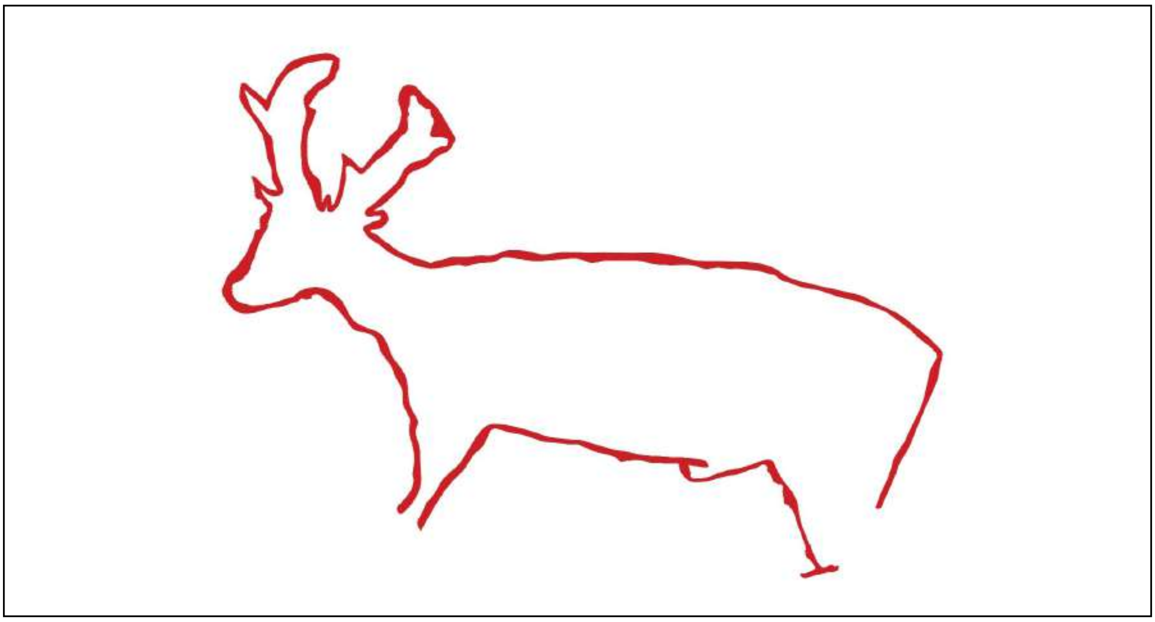


Fig. 4.9.22b Deer

The figure of a deer is shown in a linear pattern. The deer's body is elegantly executed (Figs. 4.9.22a-4.9.22b).

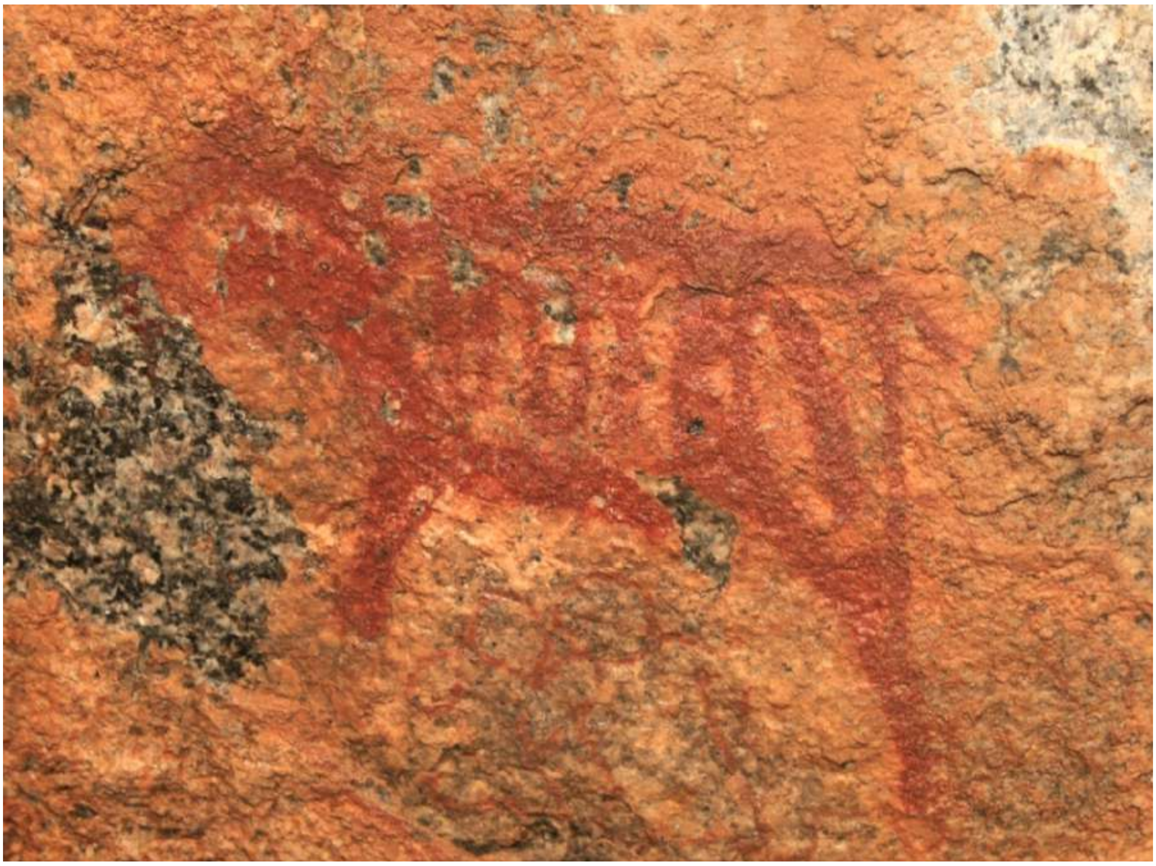


Fig. 4.9.23a X-ray form of tiger

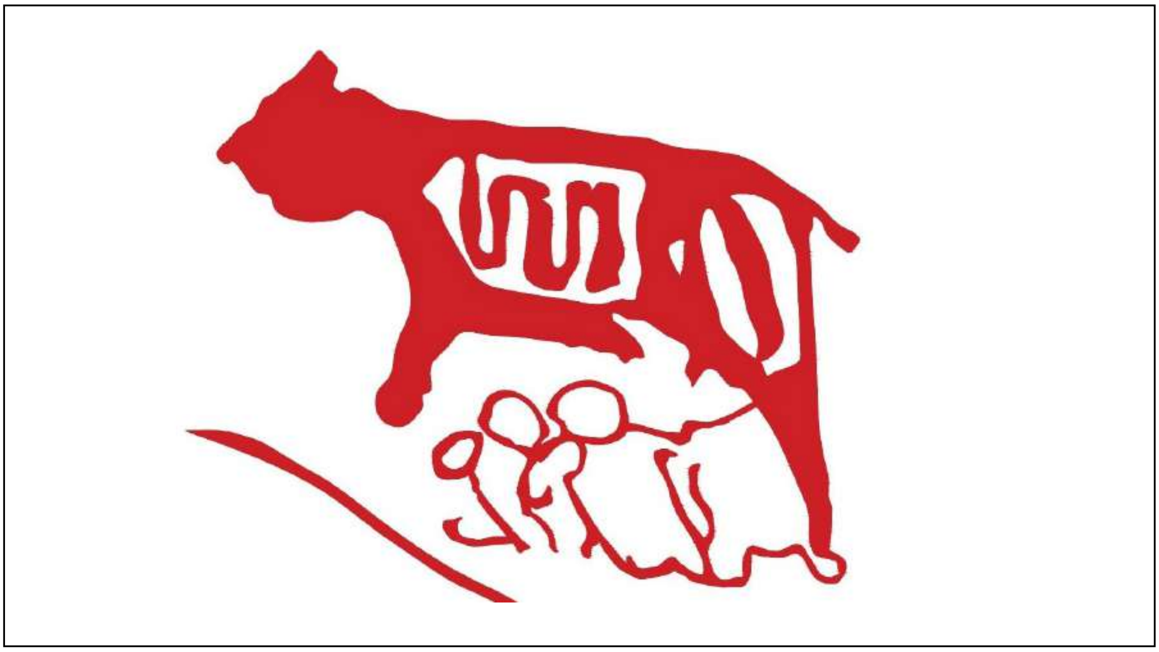


Fig. 4.9.23b X-ray form of tiger

The animal, which looks like a tiger is drawn in a linear pattern. The interior of the body, is seen with ample space with intestinal features drawn in curved lines, like X-ray paintings (Figs. 4.9.23a-4.9.23b).

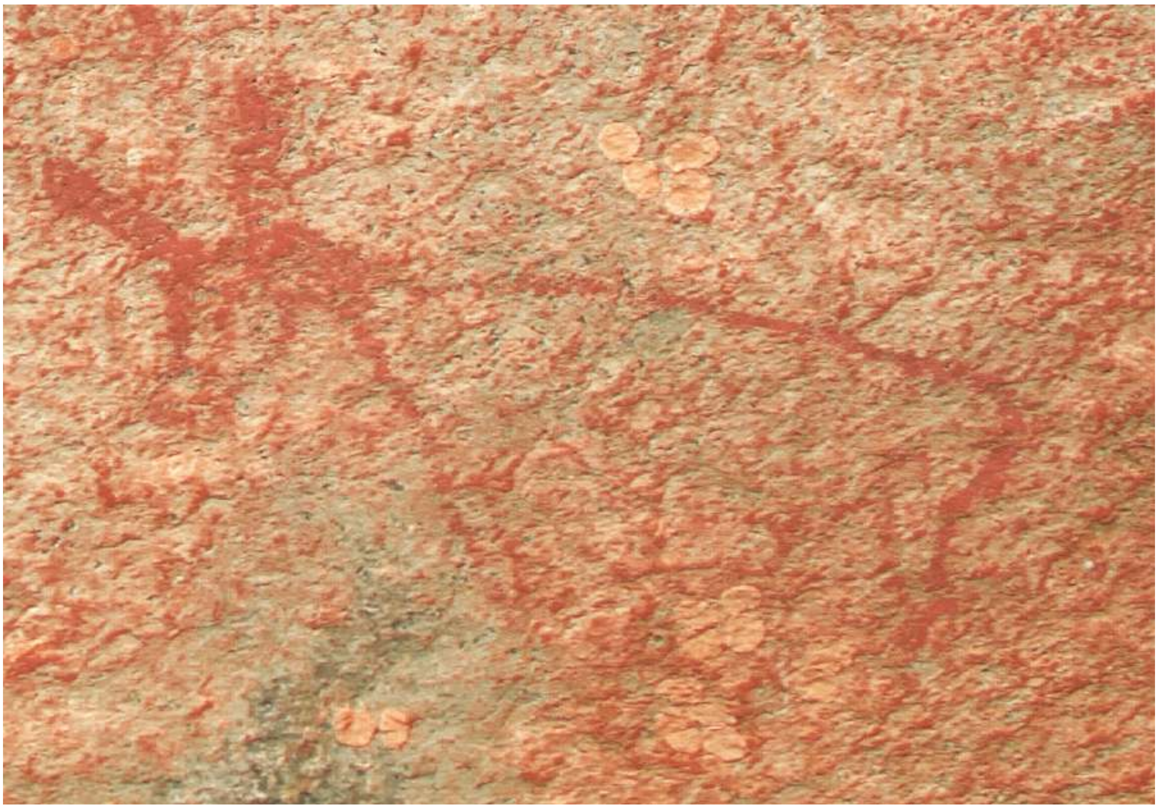


Fig. 4.9.24a Donkey

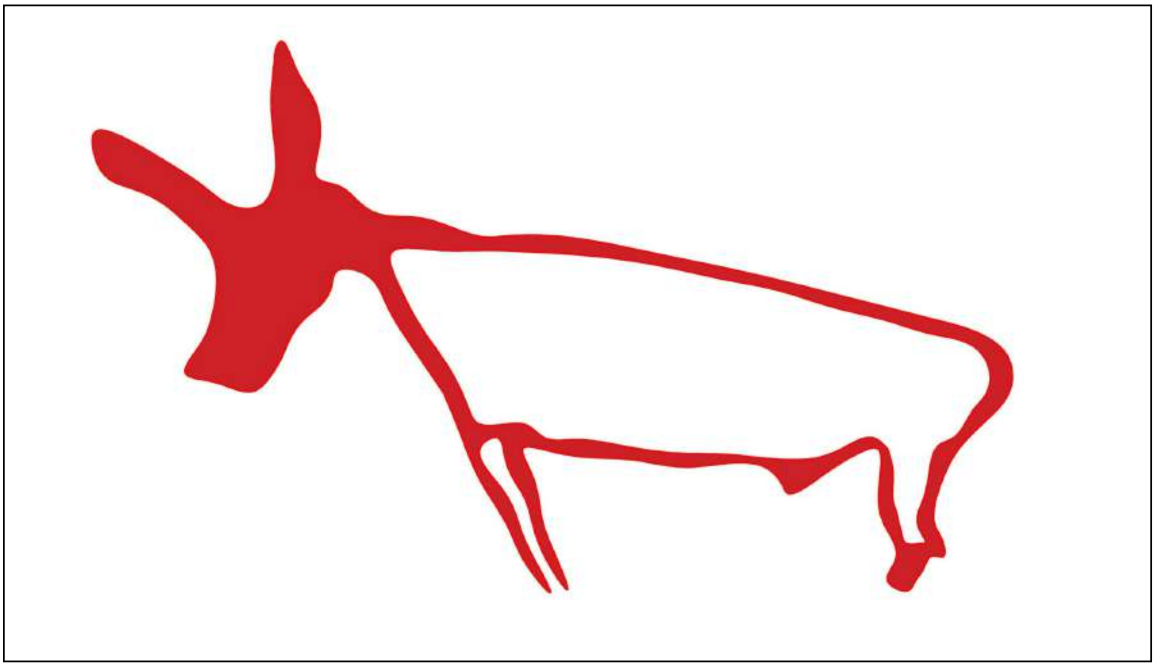


Fig. 4.9.24b Donkey

The figure of the donkey-like animal is drawn in a simple linear painting. The colour is applied densely on its head and ear areas, the rest left empty (Figs. 4.9.24a-4.9.24b).

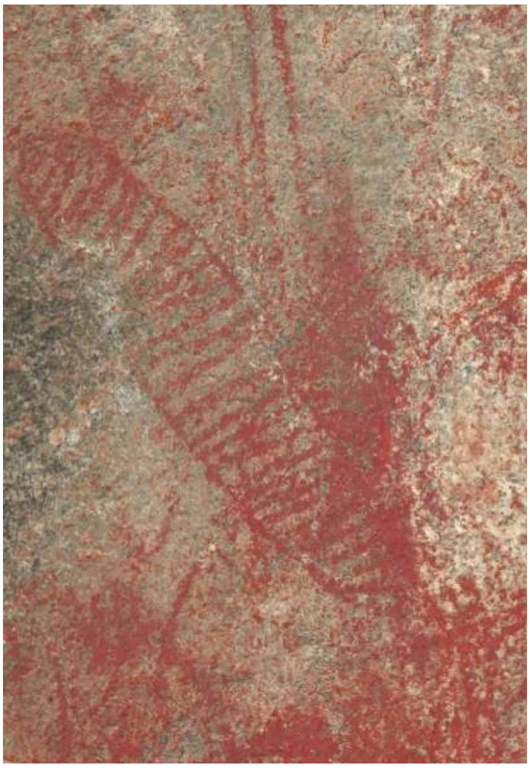


Fig. 4.9.25a Boat-like sign

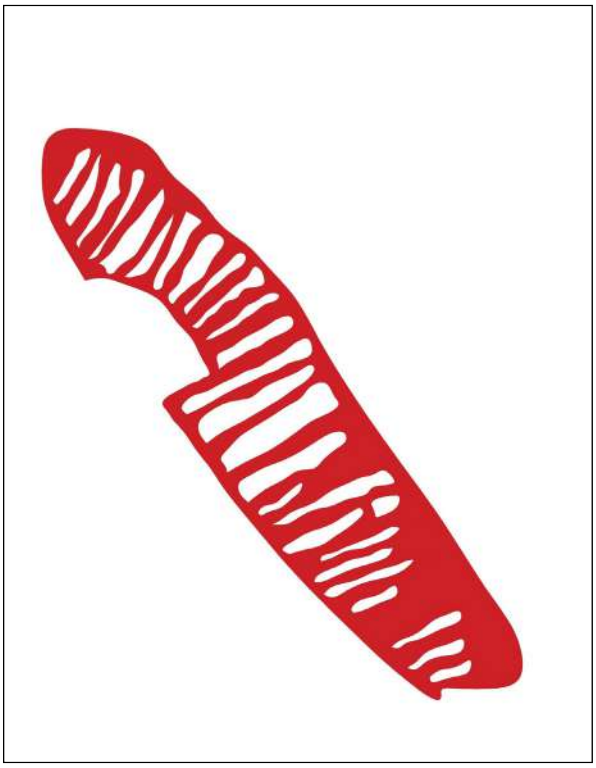


Fig. 4.9.25b Boat-like sign

The boat/fence-like sign his filled with diagonal series lines. The painter has planned and designed a particular shape. For the hunting, they build a fence with trees, vines and lace and keep it in the path of the animal. Then they chase the animals away from specific directions to trap animals in such fences (Figs. 4.9.25a-4.9.25b).

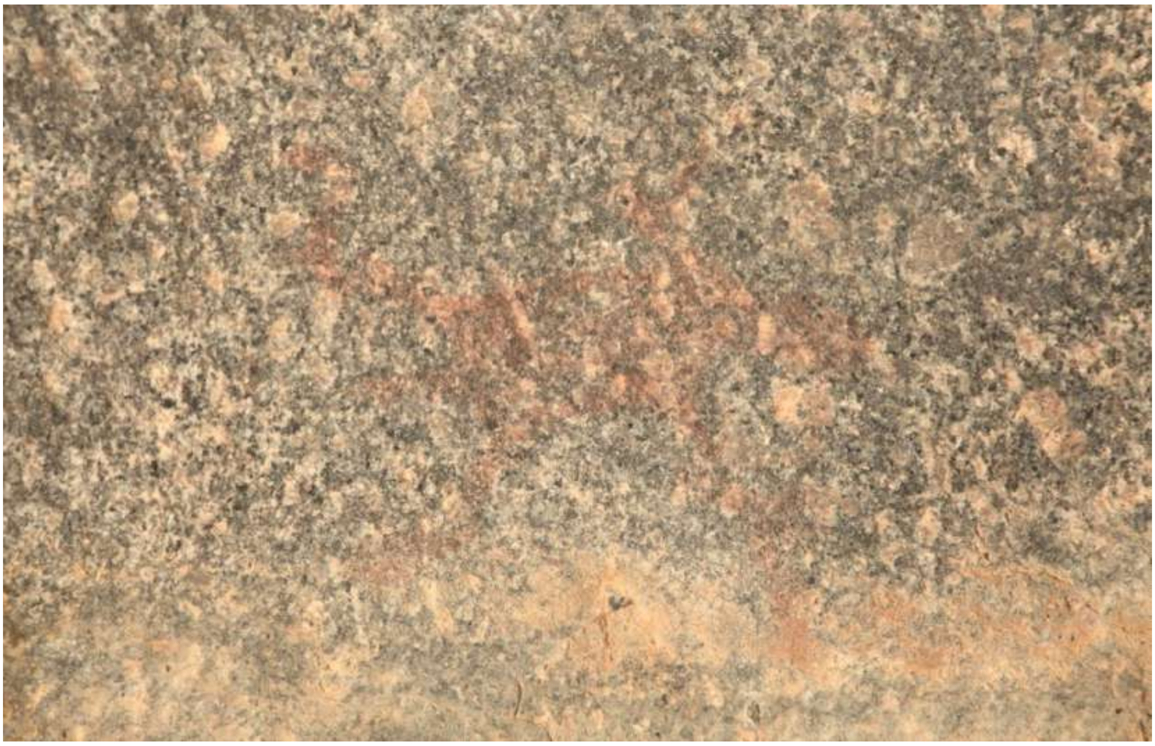


Fig. 4.9.26a Human

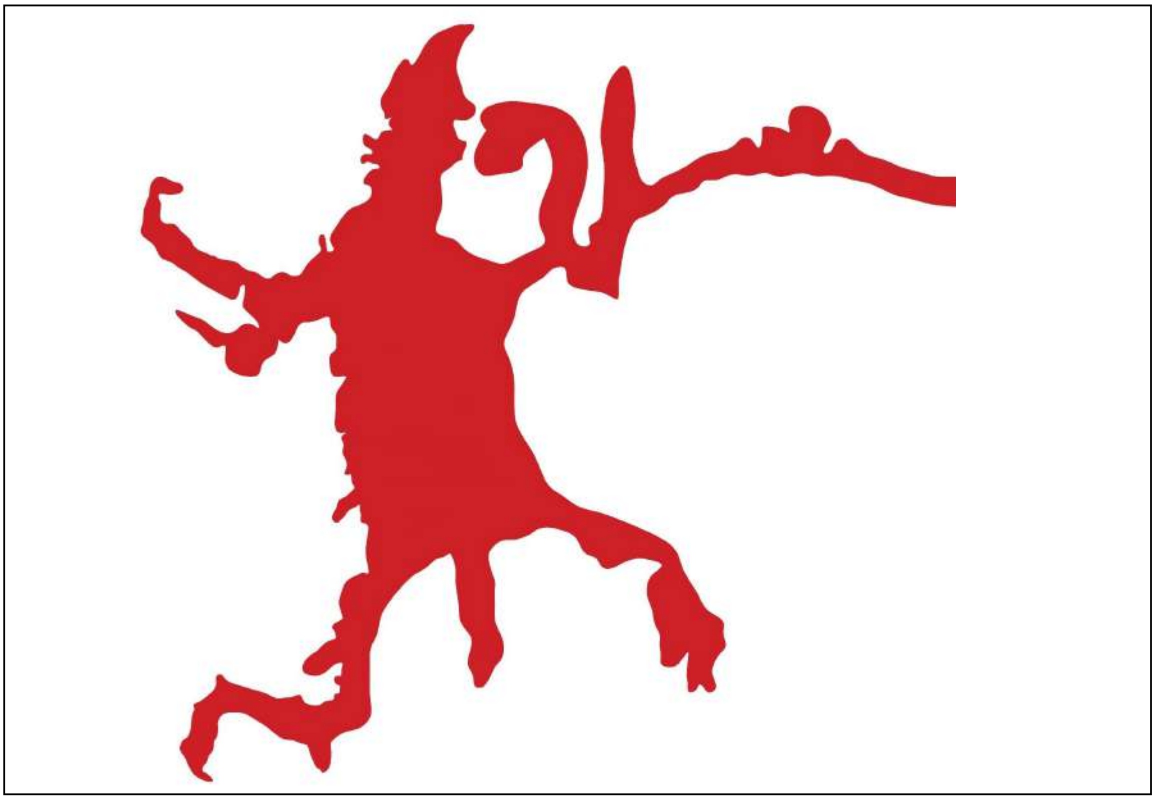


Fig. 4.9.26b Human

A human figure, slightly faded, is drawn with red colour and is standing with both hands raised (Figs. 4.9.26a-4.9.26b).

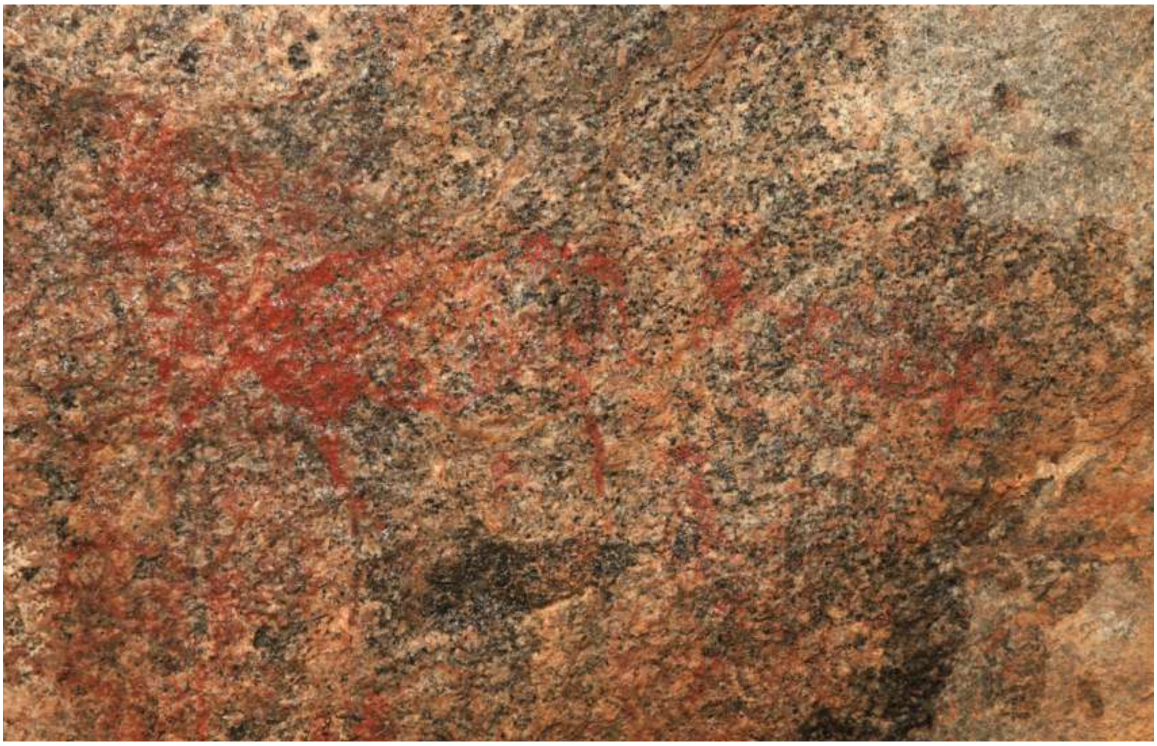


Fig. 4.9.27a Animal

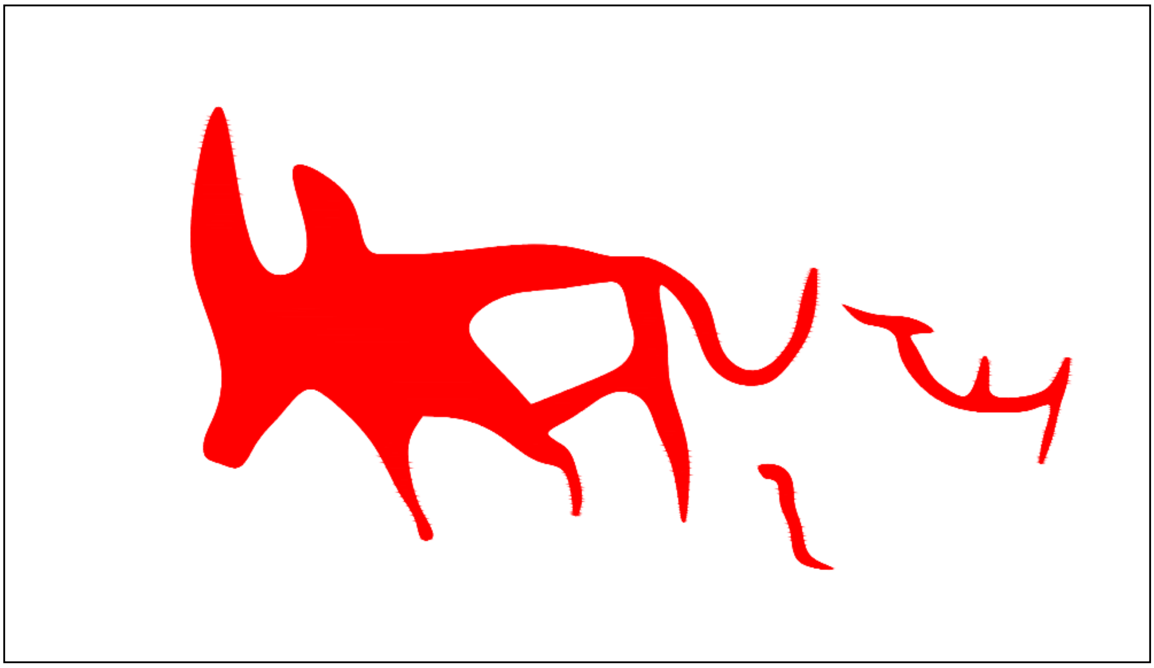


Fig. 4.9.27b Animal

The bovine-like figure is drawn in a linear pattern with red colour. The body of the cattle is coloured red in transverse lines (Figs. 4.9.27a-4.9.27b).

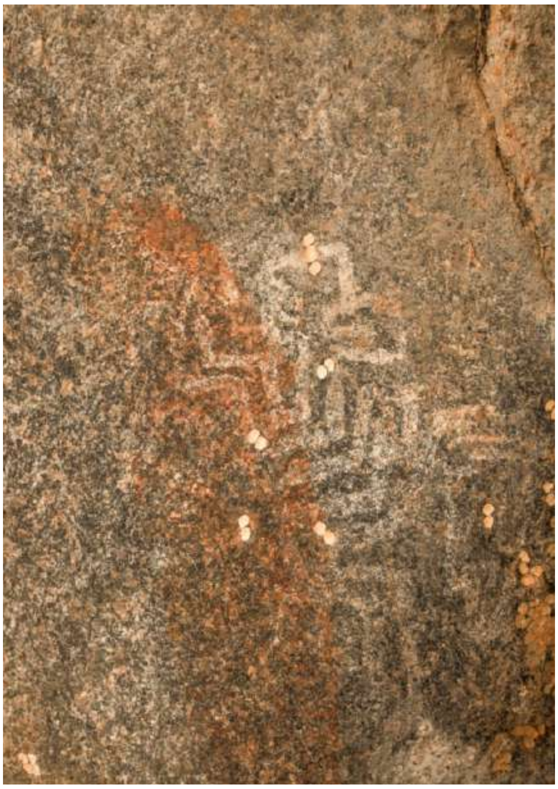


Fig. 4.9.28a Zig-zag pattern

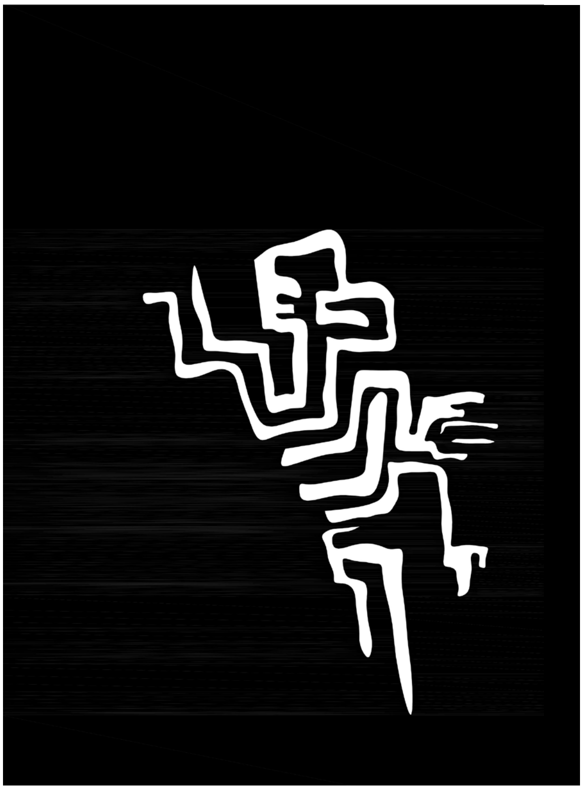


Fig. 4.9.28b Zig-zag pattern

The place is mainly painted with animal figures and rarely has decorative ornaments in white. These geometric lines are curved in a zig-zag pattern (Figs. 4.9.28a-4.9.28b).

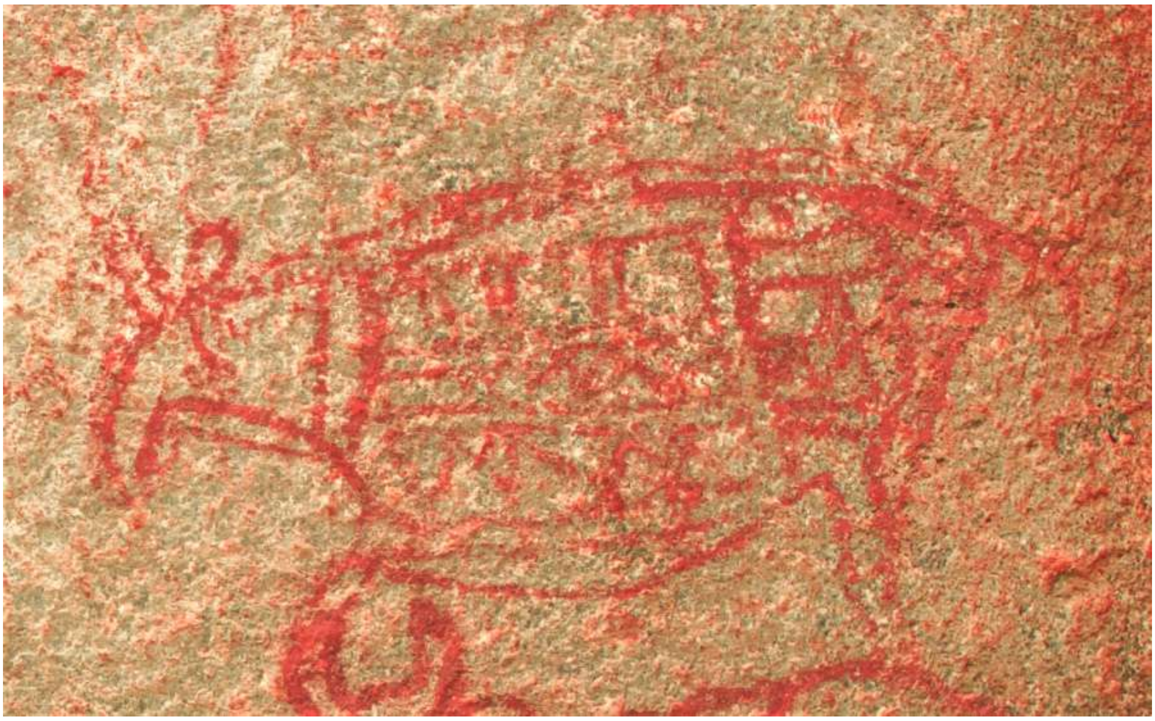


Fig. 4.9.29a Animal

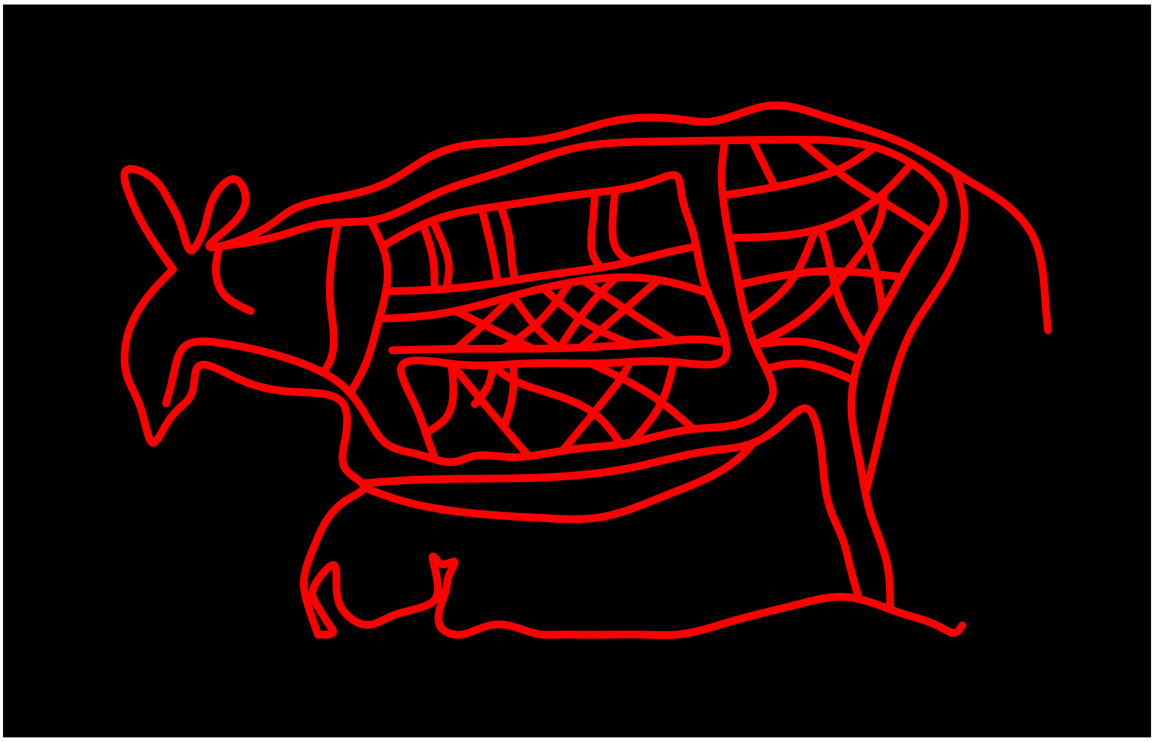


Fig. 4.9.29b Animal

A cow-like animal is drawn with X-ray sketches all over the body (Figs. 4.9.29a-4.9.29b).

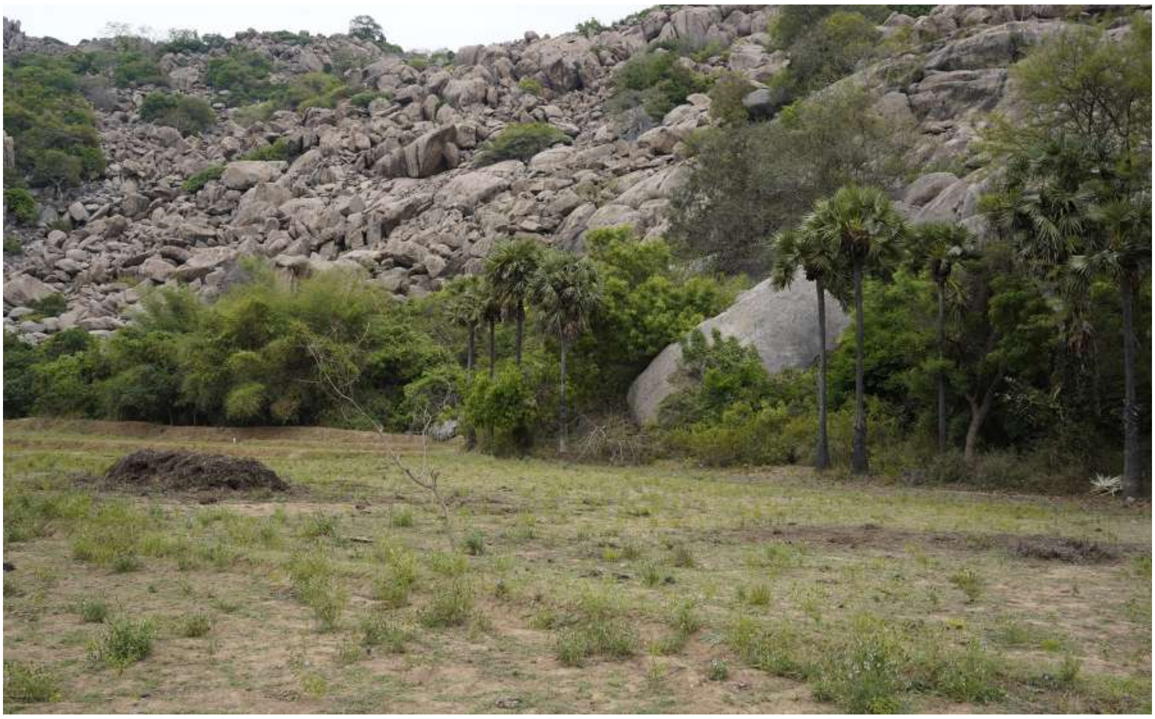


Fig. 4.9.30 General view of the rock-shelter

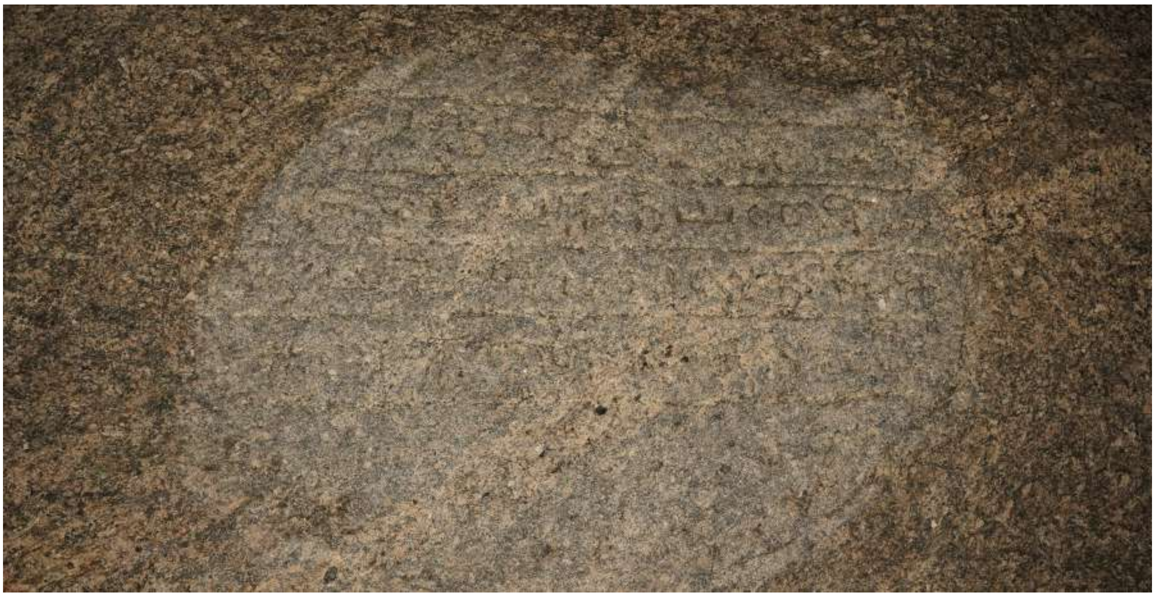


Fig. 4.9.31 Inscription

Nallanpillaiperral

Description

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of human and animal interaction. The nature of the site comprises bruising and pictographs in which the bruising contributes much.

Panel Description

The content comprises human and animal figures mainly and geometric symbols are found scarce (Figs.4.9.32a-4.9.32b). The rock art here is more thematically executed rather than being abstract in nature. Stylistically speaking a level of proficiency and attention to detail is evident from the bruising. Speaking of the pictographs, both red, white and polychrome paintings are evident although less in number.

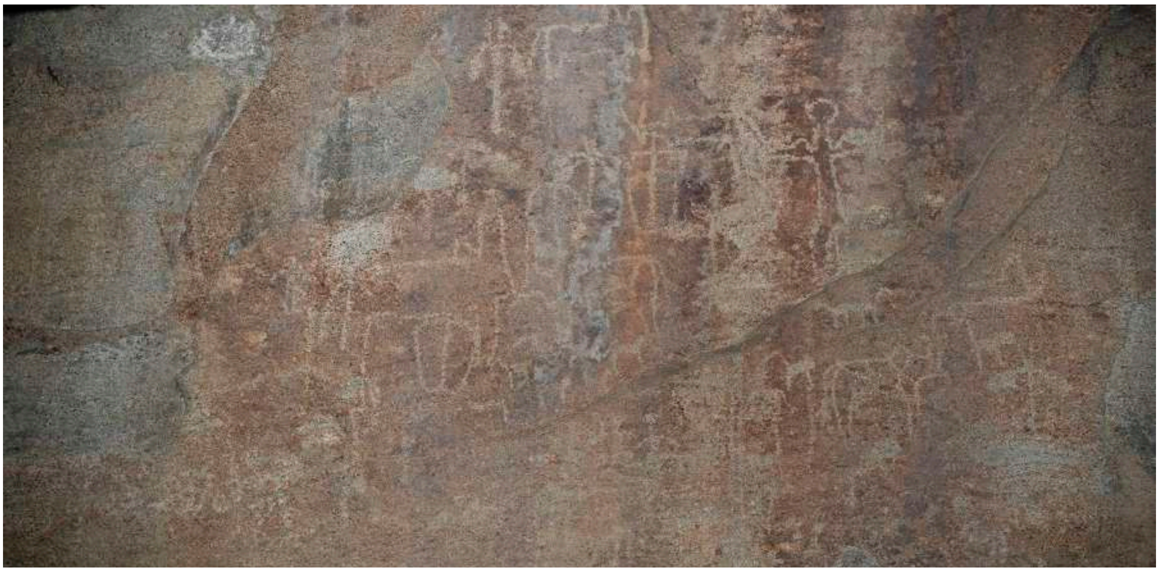


Fig. 4.9.32a Human and animal interactions

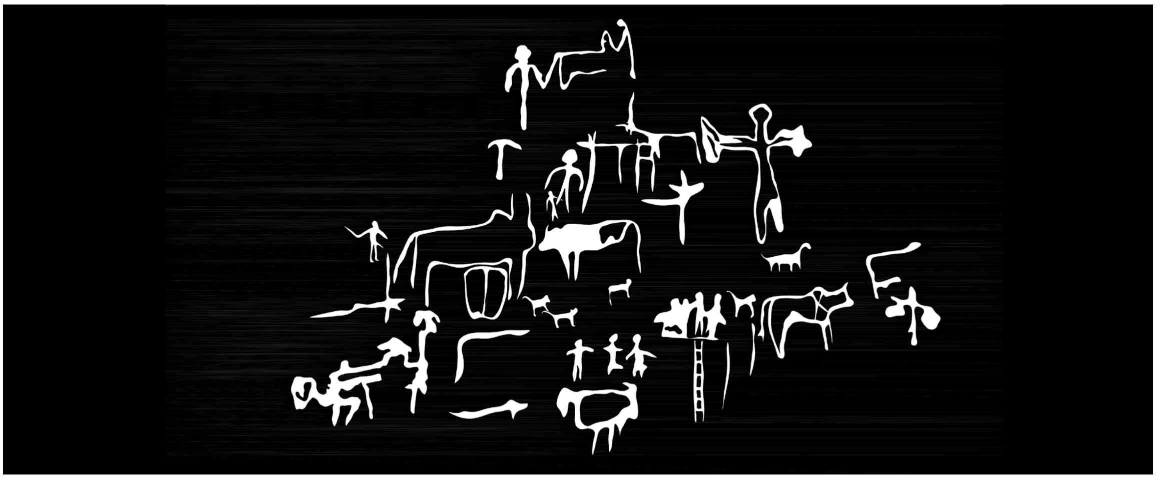


Fig. 4.9.32b Human and animal interactions

To the extreme left is the image is of a bull facing right, as evident from its prominent hump. Immediately on the right there is another bull figure facing left but smaller in size than the earlier one and the middle portion of the image is damaged, the gut area of the bull is clearly visible making it an X-Ray image (Figs. 4.9.33a-4.9.33b). Above this, there are two human figures, the left most one is the smallest with circular head, arch-shaped hands and legs. On the right, the bigger human figure is evident in a similar style. Beneath it, there are three undistinguishable animal figures, all three facing right.

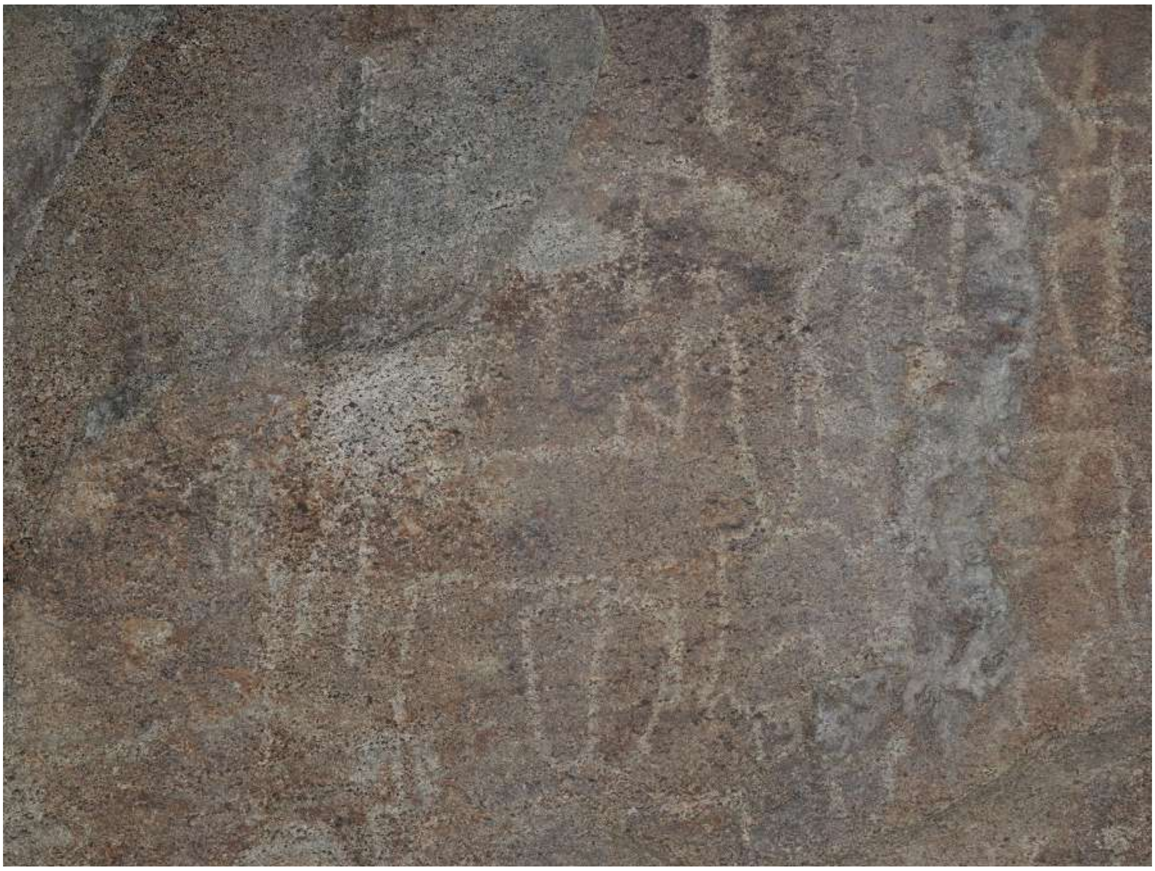


Fig. 4.9.33a Human and animals

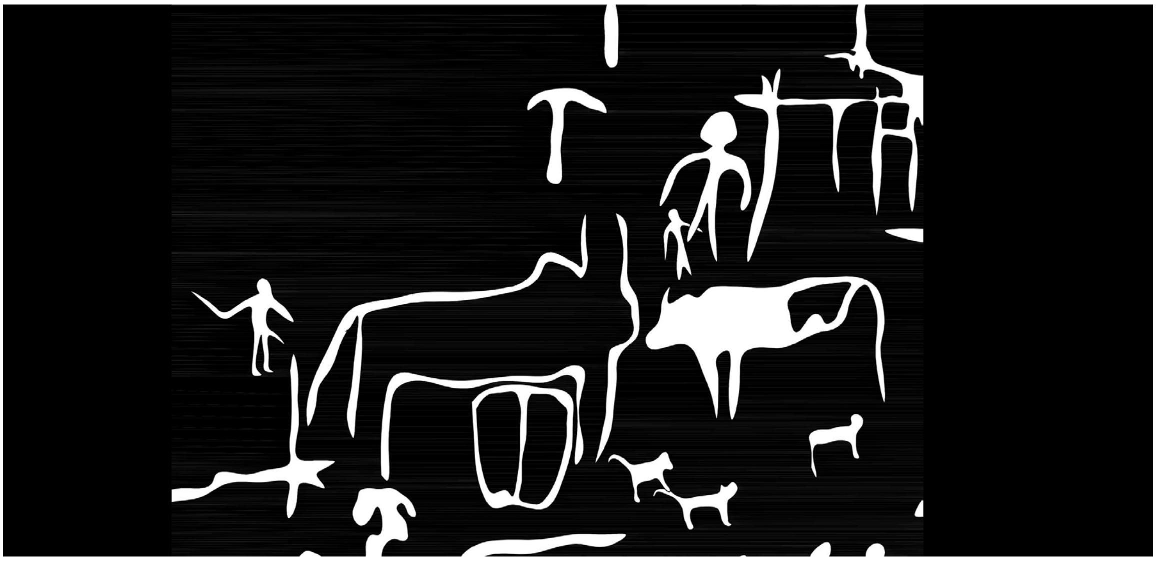


Fig. 4.9.33b Human and animals

Beneath the dual bull figures on the extreme left there is a cluster of unidentifiable animal or human images (Figs. 4.9.34a-4.9.34b). Towards the right of it, there is a simple linear lines in the shape of a right angle. Further right, there are three consecutive human figures of similar fashion with extended hands, circular heads but the rightmost one's body portion is shown slightly broader than the other two. Beneath these human figures, there is a bird figure made in an in-filled fashion with a vacuum at its body portion.

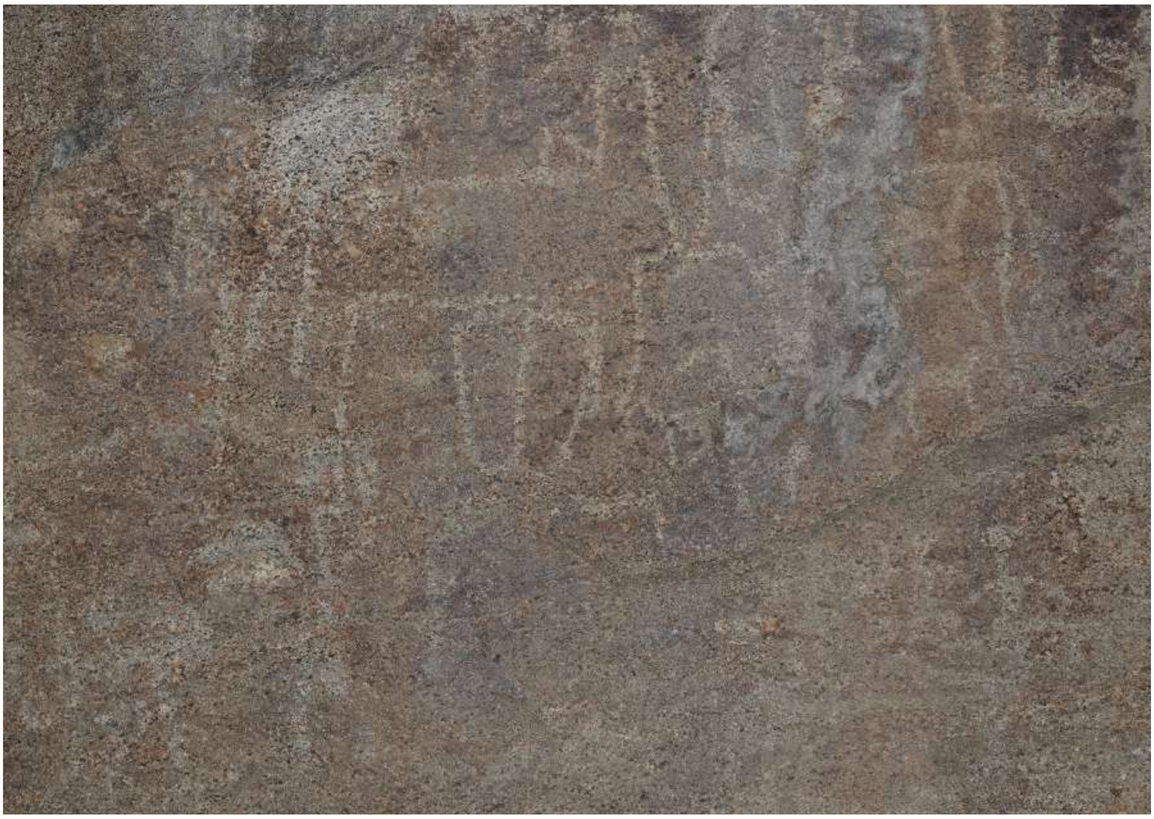


Fig. 4.9.34a Human and animal

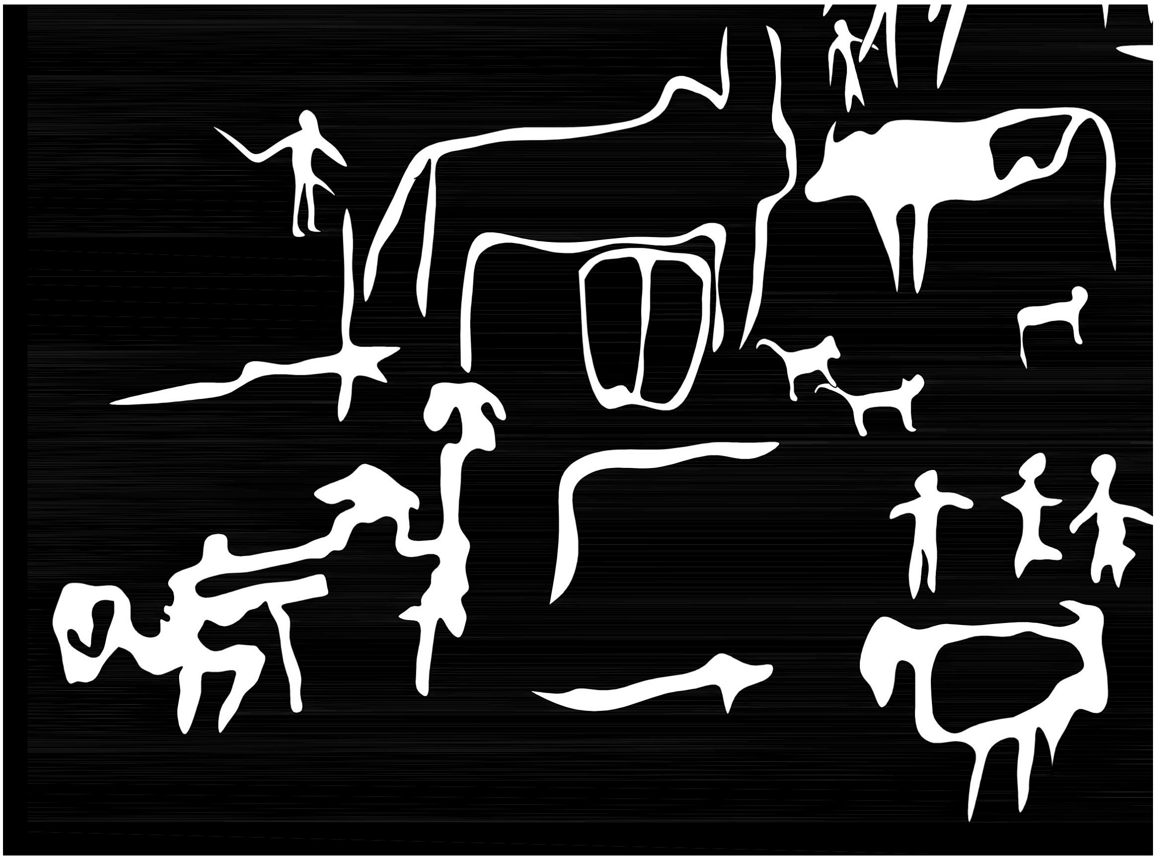


Fig. 4.9.34b Human and animal

This image shows the right half of the panel. Starting from the top, there is a big-sized human figure outlined with a circular head and extended hands with a bulge on the mid portion of both hands probably denoting the muscularity of the individual (Figs. 4.9.35a-4.9.35b). Further left of it on top, there is two subsequent stick fashioned animal figures. Exactly beneath these, there is a stick fashioned human figure with extended hands and uplifted left leg probably denoting some posture or motion. Below the big human figure there is another small animal image shown facing right.

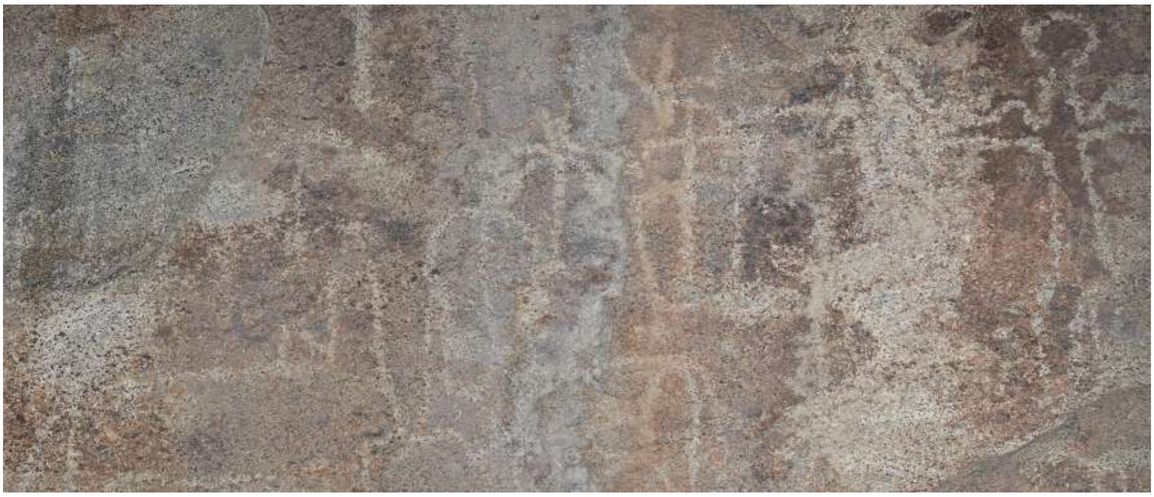


Fig. 4.9.35a Human and animal

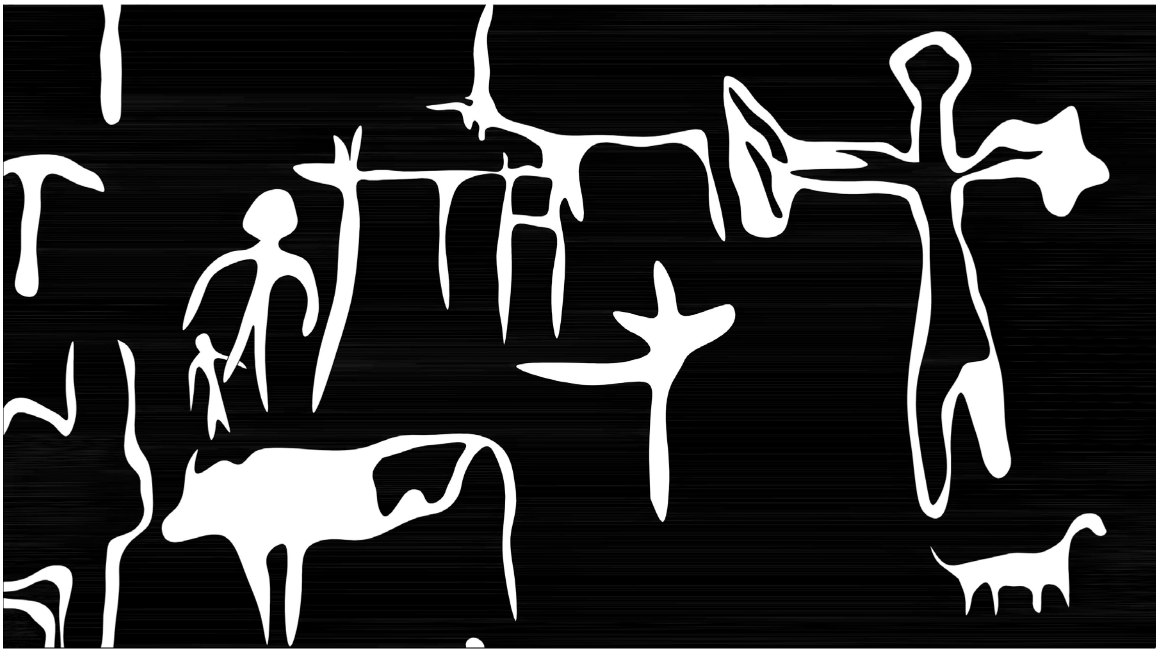


Fig. 4.9.35b Human and animal

Beneath the small right facing human figure there is yet another depiction of a bull facing right evident due to its prominent hump (Figs. 4.9.36a-4.9.36b). Behind this, on the left, there is another small animal figure made of thin in-filled fashion. Subsequently, to the left of it, there are two in-filled fashioned human figures with extended hands and shorter legs and a distinct head. In the immediate left of similar size there is a rider image, beneath all these three images there is an indication of the platform in the form of a line. From the middle of the platform two parallel lines with six intersection lines in between etched like a ladder probably indicating a way/path/track/road.

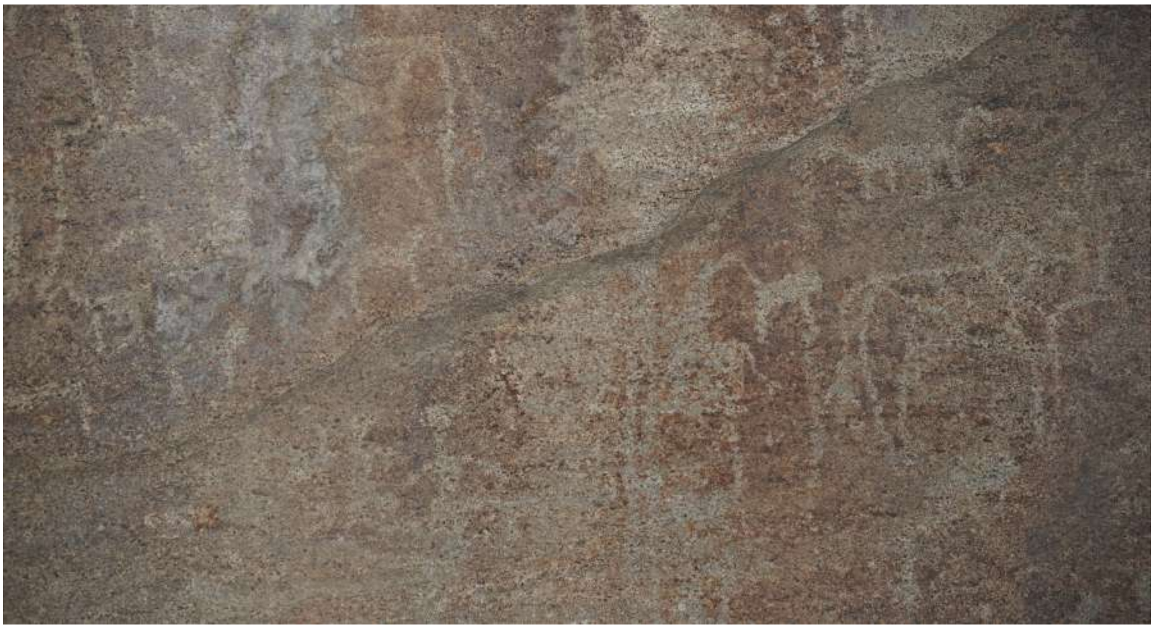


Fig. 4.9.36a Human, animals, birds and ladder

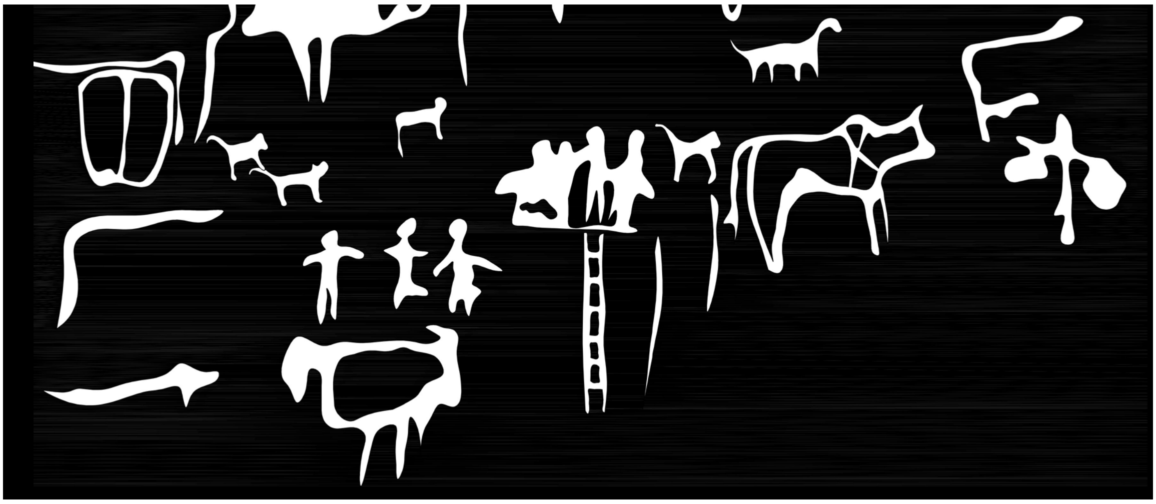


Fig. 4.9.36b Human, animals, birds and ladder

Here, there are two white ochre human figures (Figs. 4.9.37a-4.9.37b). The left one is shown with in-filled pattern with a circular head, depiction of halo/head-gear, both hands rested on the waist and legs in attention posture unlike the other figures with wide open legs. Right beside it, there is another human figure shown upside down in stick fashion, circular head wide open hands and shorter legs.

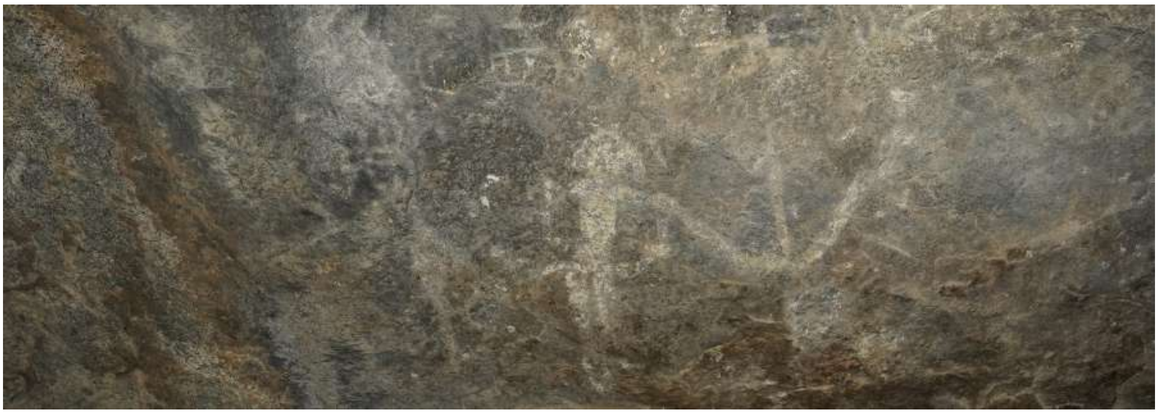


Fig. 4.9.37a Human with weapon

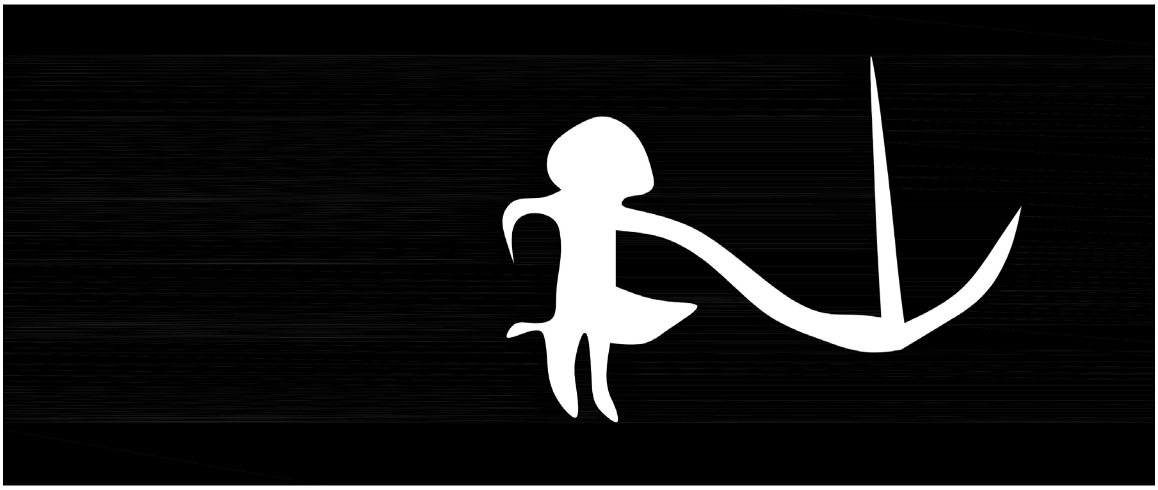


Fig. 4.9.37b Human with weapon

Two pictographs of which one red and the other of red and white ochre are found. The topmost pictograph is of a geometric vertical cross symbol with white ochre outline and red ochre in-filling, but a considerable amount of space is noticed between these two colours (Figs. 4.9.38a-4.9.38b). Exactly beneath it, there is a human figure made of white ochre in in-filled fashion. The most intriguing feature is the head portion of the human figure, where it's shown facing left with multiple thin lines projecting towards the right from the head denoting the hair. The hands of the figure are shown extended of which the left one is depicted holding an object (weapon) and the right hand is shown pointing upwards.

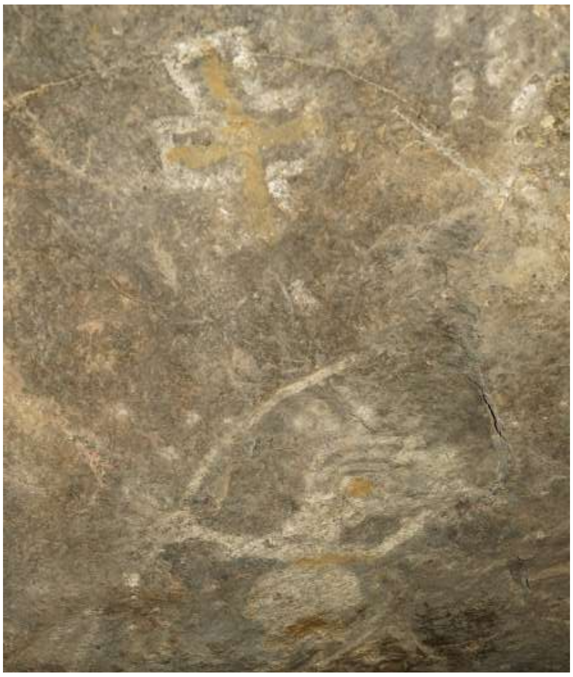


Fig. 4.9.38a Cross and unidentified sign

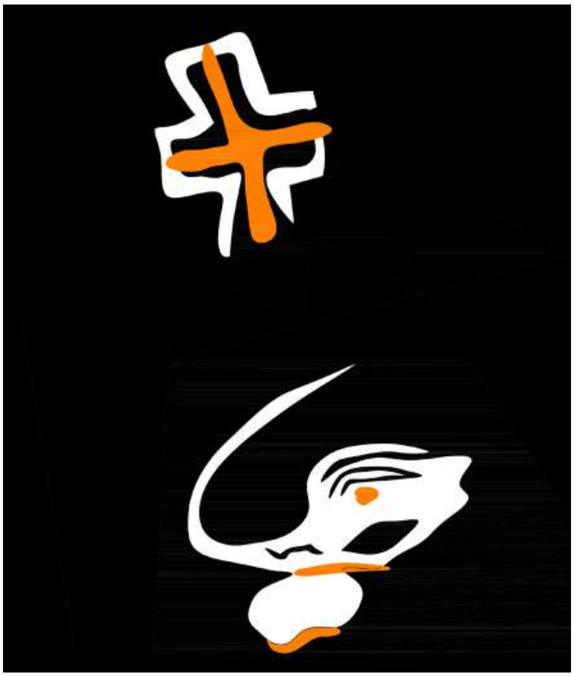


Fig. 4.9.38b Cross and unidentified sign

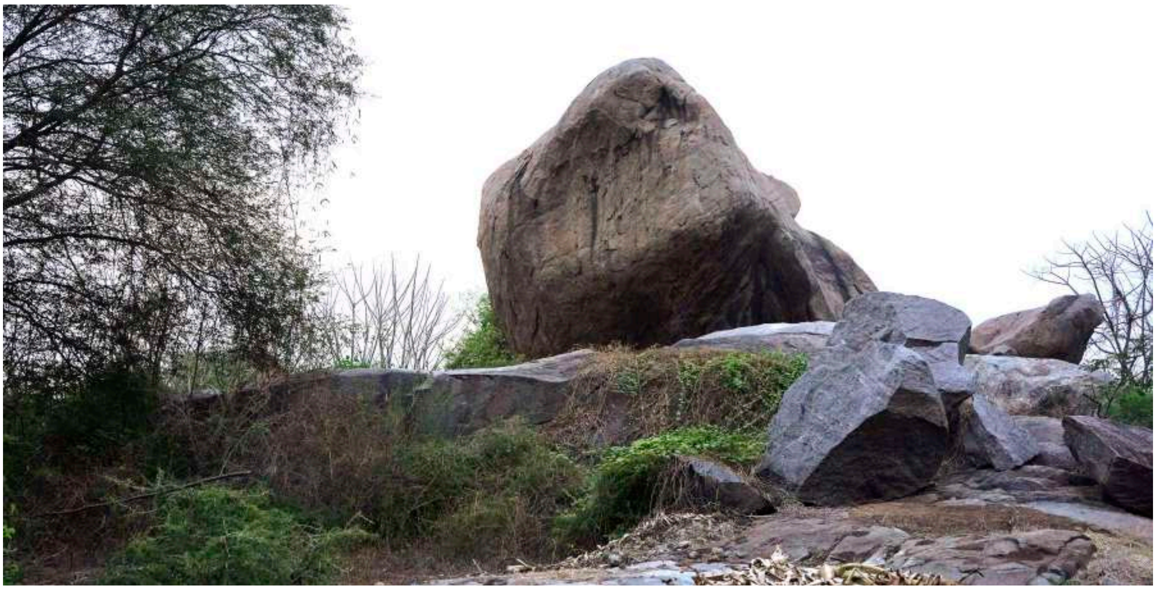


Fig. 4.9.39 General view of Pakkam

Pakkam

Rock-Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 5 m, the total length of the rock shelter is about 5 m and the total height of the inclined surface of the rocky surface is 6 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 5 m. The total painting surface is about 2x2.5m. The documentation is carried out from west to east.

Description

The paintings are found at the base and the ceiling portion of the rock shelter. Paintings of red and white ochre are found here of which the white ochre ones are more in number. The white ochre paintings are mostly of stick fashion and simpler in execution. Whereas red ochre ones are more abstract in nature both thematically and stylistically. The white ochre ones are comparatively smaller in size than the paintings involving in red ochre.

The rock-shelter is painted with white paintings. This painting is in a vertical position. On the right side, a man is holding weapons and raised hands. Weapons are facing up like celebrating a victory. On the left side, a geometrical symbol was drawn, it is square and equally divided into four boxes. Circles were drawn at the peripheral here.

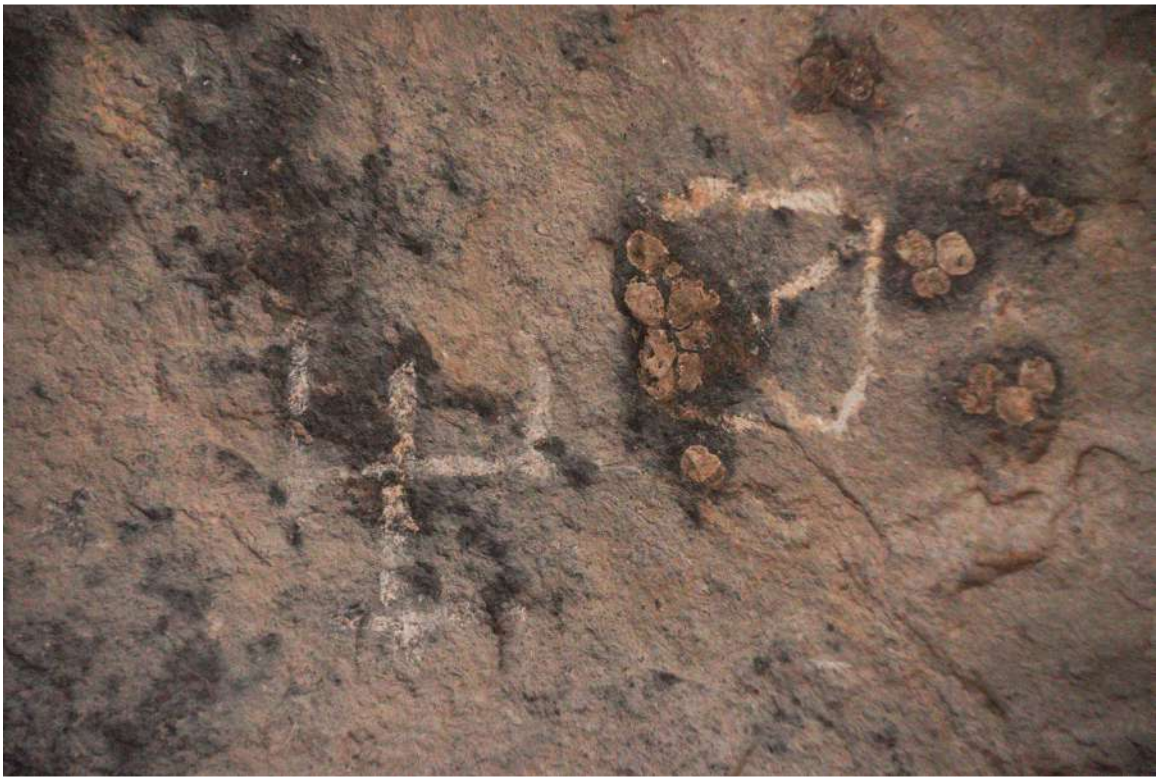


Fig. 4.9.40a Human figure

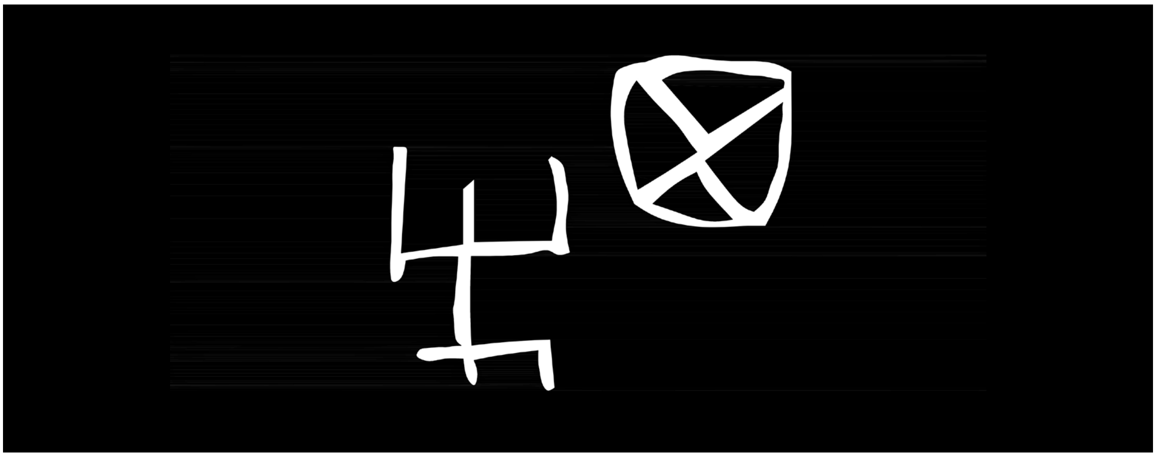


Fig. 4.9.40b Human figure

Panel Description

The painting on the left is of an ithyphallic human figure made of white ochre in stick fashion. Both hands are shown in extended form either raised up or holding any object could be possible (fig. 4.9.40a). The legs portions are almost faded and assumptions with ithyphallic is made with its left over visible residue of the paintings. To the right of the human figure there is another square in white ochre with diagonal cross lines found with encrustations of lichens on its left portion.

Paintings of this cluster are of white ochre including human, animal, geometric and several faded unidentified paintings (Fig. 4.9.41a). Starting from the right the two similar ithyphallic human figures with arch-shaped hands and ridged legs painted in stick fashion. Next to it, on the left, is a geometric symbol of square with diagonal

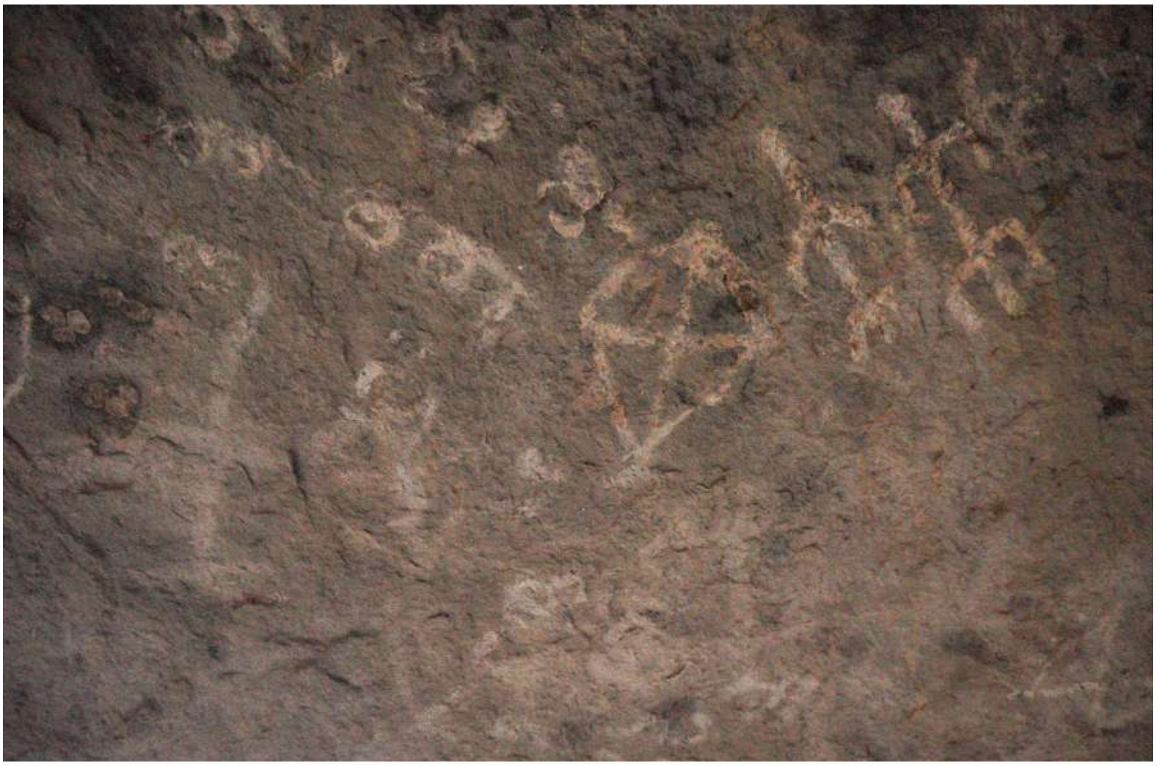


Fig. 4.9.41a Human, animal and geometric signs

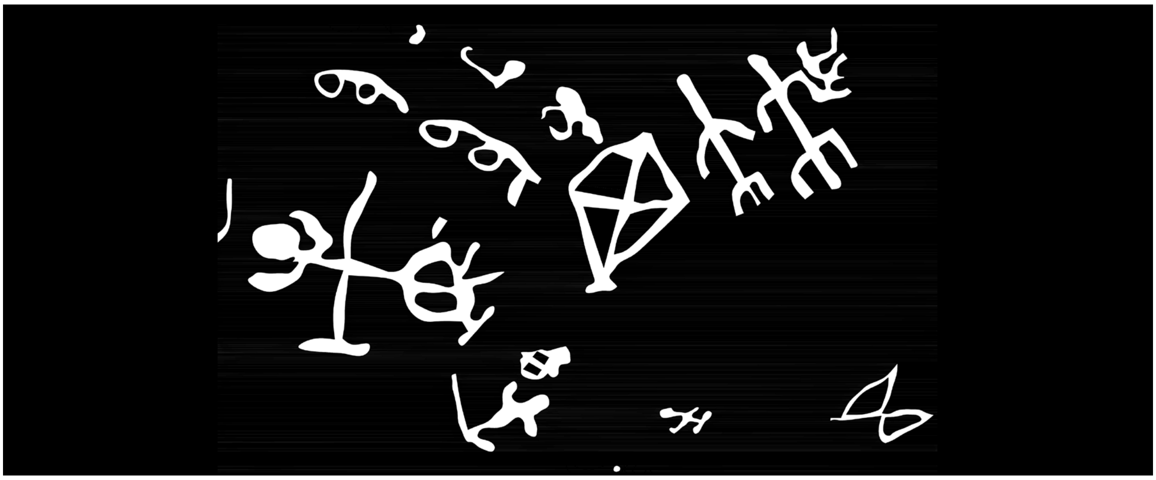


Fig. 4.9.41b Human, animal and geometric signs

cross lines is present. Above it, there are six undistinguishable animal paintings of white ochre painted in a curvy parallel line of three each. Further left of the geometric symbol, there are two human figures that are barely visible. The immediate one is made

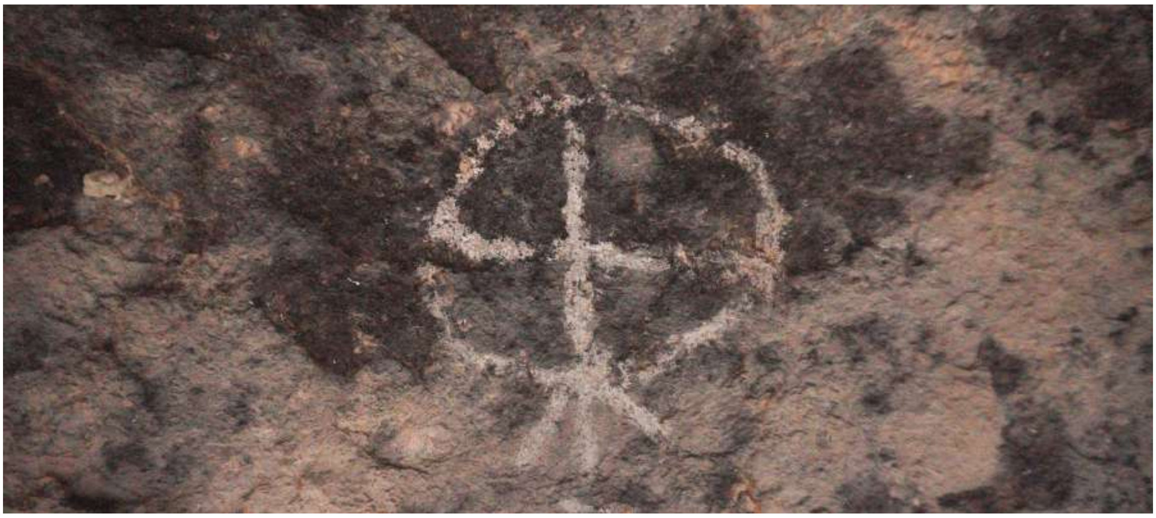


Fig. 4.9.42a Ithyphallic human figure

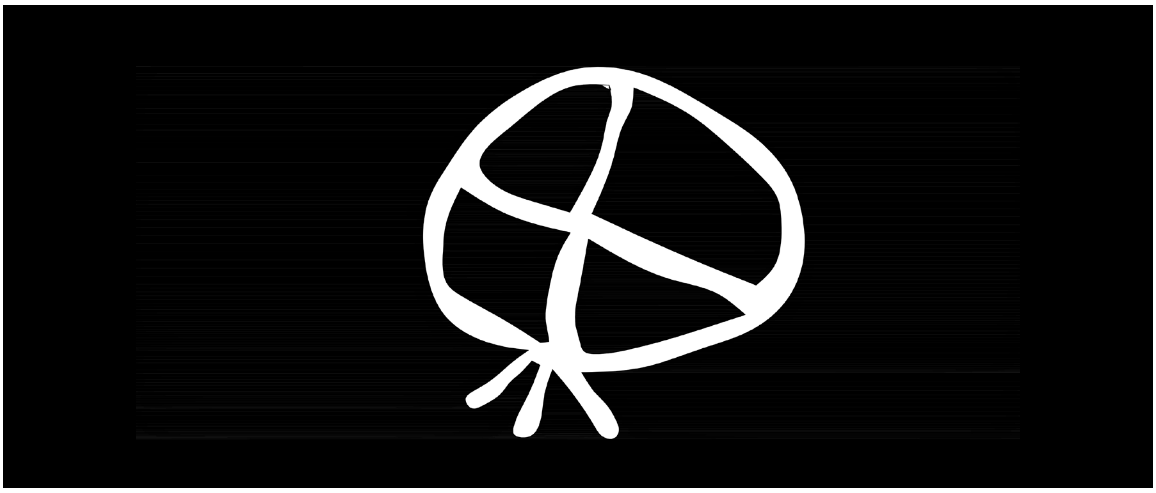


Fig. 4.9.42a Ithyphallic human figure

of infilling fashion but its features are undistinguishable but the encircling line around it is clearly evident. Left of it, there is another simple stick fashion human figure with extended hands, faded legs and elongated head. Beneath it, there are instances of faded unidentified paintings probably of infilling fashion.

Ithyphallic human figure with extended hands with encircling line around it (Fig. 4.9.41a). Probably denoting circling motion or any kind of ritual with the involvement of a rope-like object.

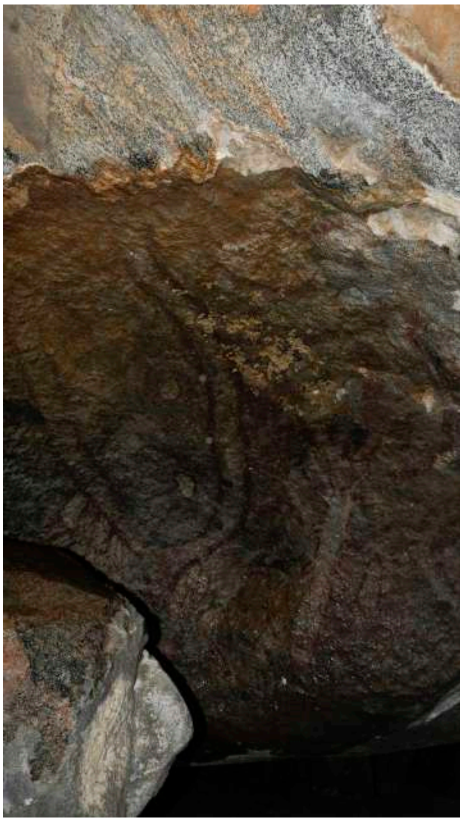


Fig. 4.9.43a Oval shape

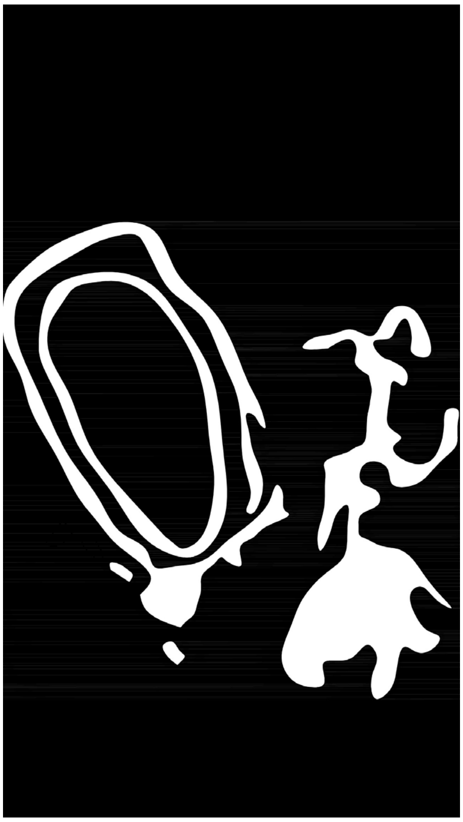


Fig. 4.9.43a Oval shape

Polychrome painting of an abstract of oval-shaped image with red ochre outline and white ochre in-filling (Fig. 4.9.42a). Double border outline made of red ochre and roughly shaped like a eye drawn in a vertical position. Inside it, along the right border, two small circles one above the other are made with red ochre outline and white ochre infilling. Right to it, there is another pictograph of human figure made of red ochre outline and white ochre infilling, the right hand is shown point upwards and the left downwards, fashioned hair or head gear, bottom portion suggesting a lower garment and in mid portion shown a budge suggesting it as a figure of woman.

The paintings are made in white ochre depicting four human figures involved in a social group activity probably dancing and musical representation (Fig. 4.9.43a). To the extreme right two humans are shown in active motion involving hands and legs, especially the left one is shown with an encircling line around the hands of that human figure suggesting a dancing scene with props. These three human figures are made in a simple stick fashion with a feature less head. The human figure which is in second position when seen from left is stylistically different from the rest of the three, it's

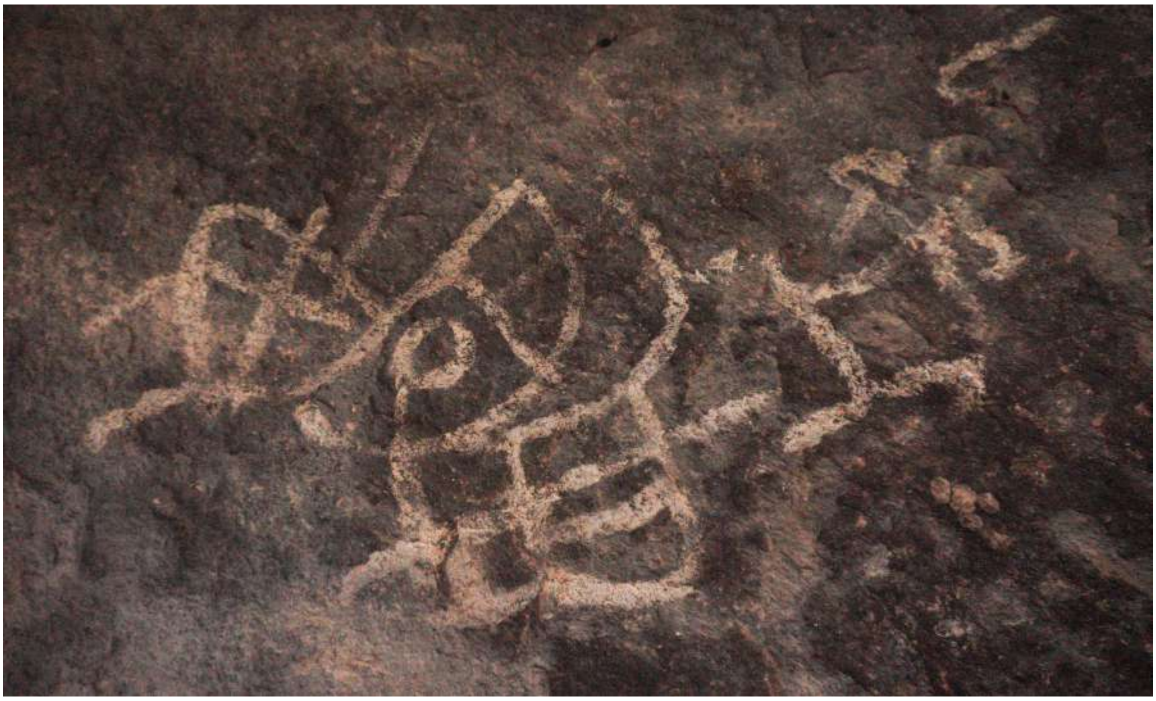


Fig. 4.9.44a Group activities

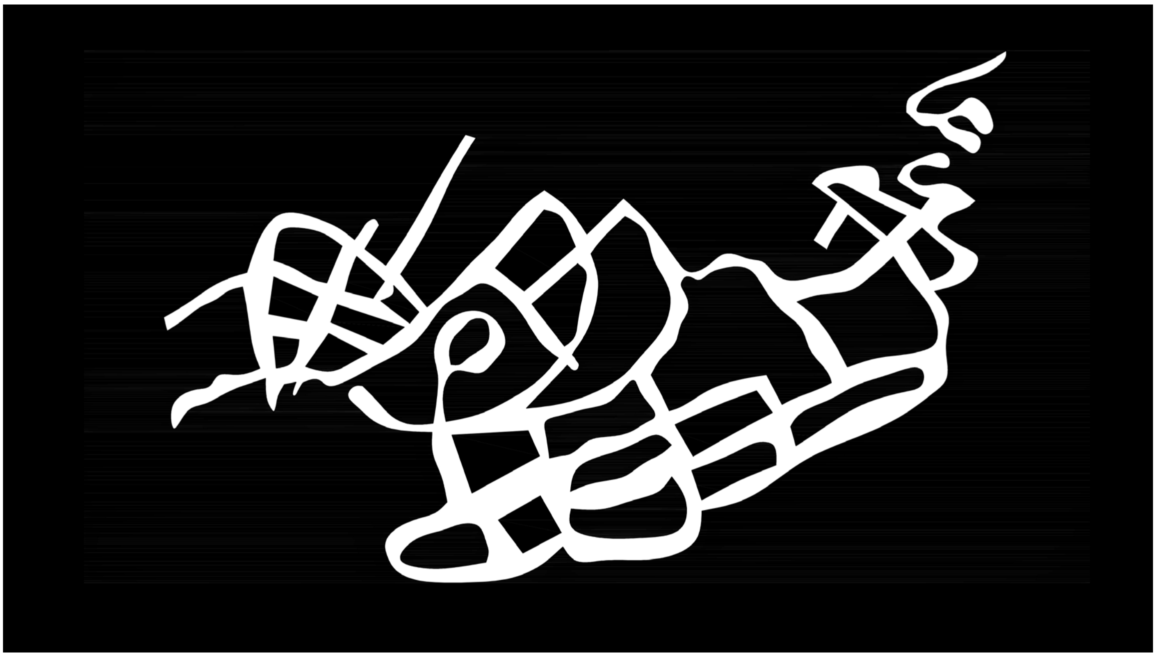


Fig. 4.9.44b Group activities

shown in sitting posture and in front of it, there is some kind of object drawn and the human figure's hands are shown in such a way that gives us an assumption that the object is some kind of musical instrument and the seated human is playing it and the left most one is using a prop while dancing with other two on the right.

Depiction of a huge plant painting made of red ochre outline and white ochre infilling (Fig. 4.9.44a). The plant is shown with a long cylindrical body with small bulges on either side and a flower-petal-like design on the top of it suggesting it could be denoting a cactus plant. Surrounding them are instances of several undistinguishable red ochre paintings revealed via D-Stretch i.e., it's uncertain whether there was infilling of white ochre like other paintings used for them or not.

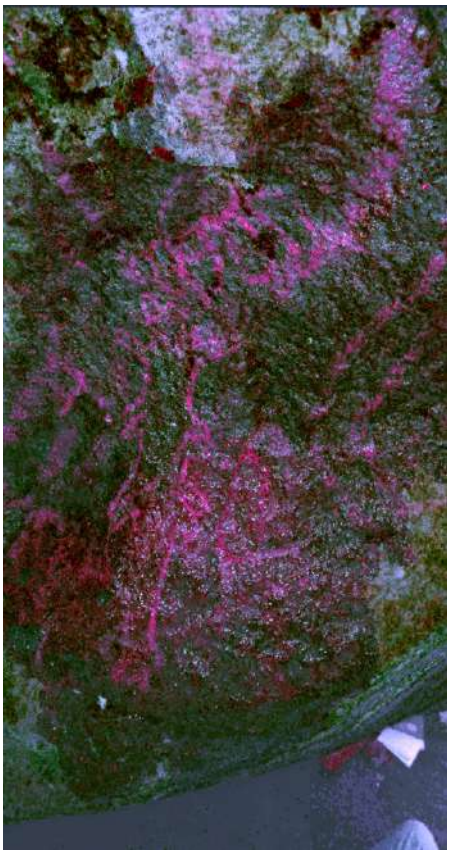


Fig. 4.9.45a Plant

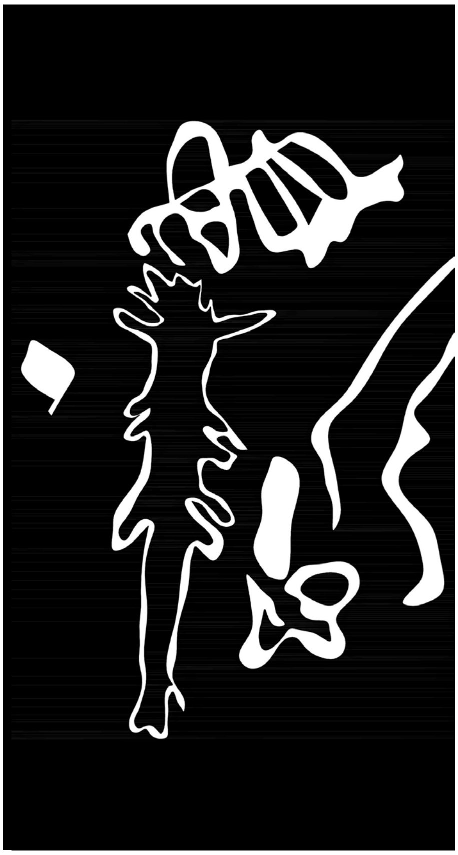
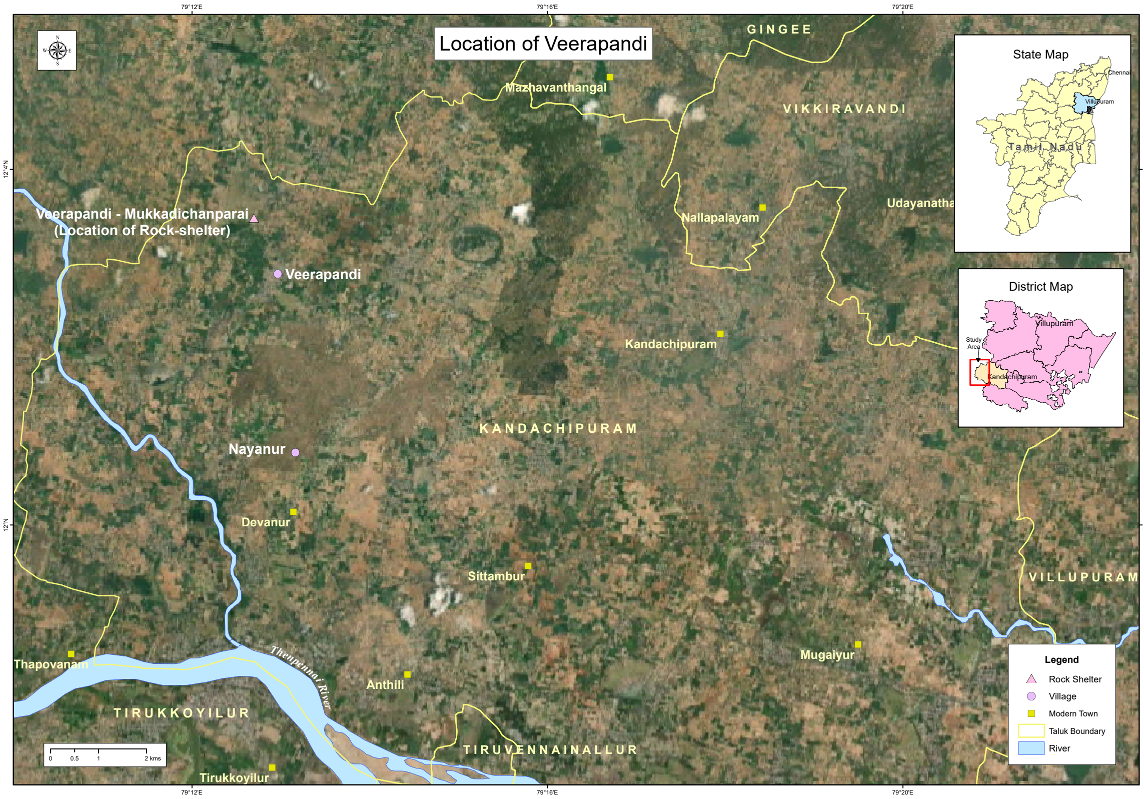


Fig. 4.9.45b Plant

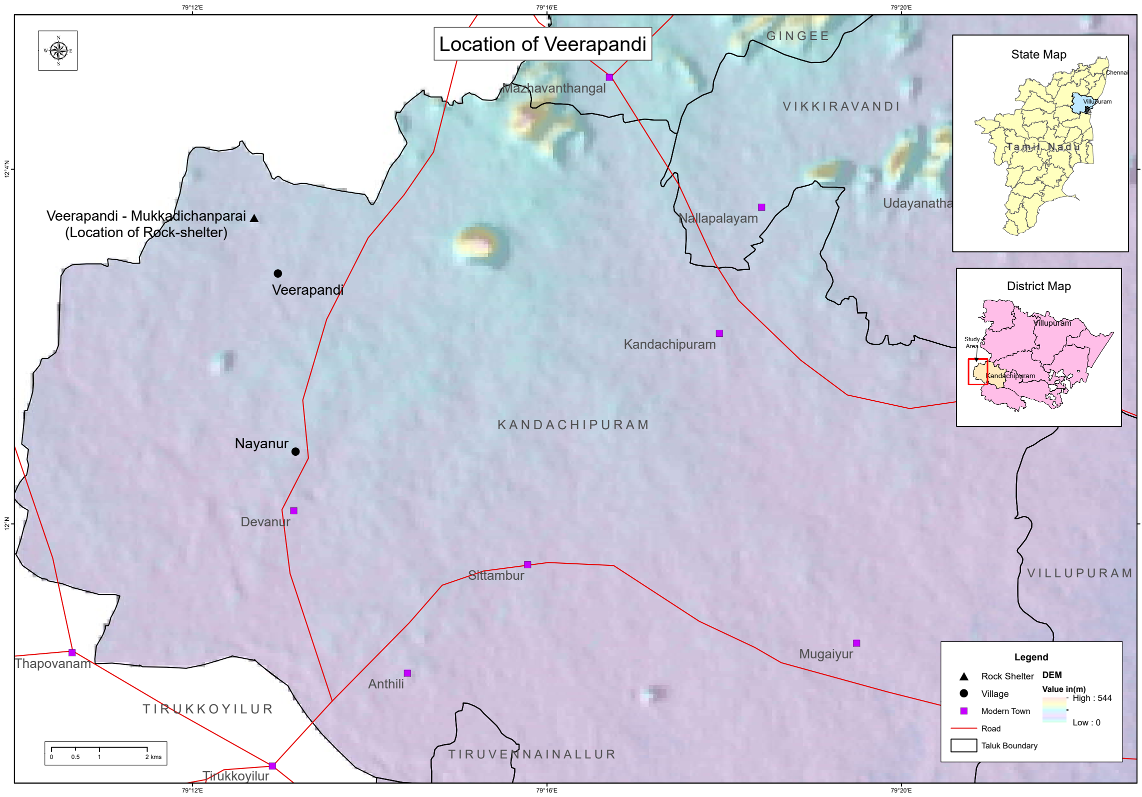
4.10 Veerapandi

Veerapandi (12.05749 N; 79.21160 E), a major village, lies on the Tirukoyilur-Vettavalam road at a distance of 13 km to the north of Tirukovilur (Map 4.10.1-4.10.2). The rock shelter locally called *mukkadichchanparai* is noticed on the way to Naraiyur. It lies in the northeast part of a huge tank. The west-facing rock shelter has both red and white pigments (Fig. 4.10.1). The white is superimposed on red. Most of the animals met with *trishul*-like figures. The Neolithic grinding grooves are noticed further south on the rocky surface, locally called *Kannimar-manñchal-teychchu-kulichcha-idam* meaning Saptamatrikas prepared turmeric paste for taking a bath. These grooves are found around a perennial pond.

A Jain tirthankara sculpture (Fig. 4.10.2) documented earlier with a defaced head is now re-installed with a newly carved face. While making the new face, the sculptor unknowingly provided curly hair.


Location of Veerapandi
GINGEE
VIKKIRAVANDI
Mazhavanthangal
Veerapandi - Mukkadichanparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Veerapandi
Nallapalayam
Udayanatham
Kandachipuram
KANDACHIPURAM
Nayanur
Devanur
Sittambur
VILLUPURAM
Thapovanam
Thenpennai River
Anthili
Mugaiyur
TIRUKKOYILUR
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Tirukkoyilur
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Villupuram
District Map
Study Area
Kandachipuram
Legend
Rock Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
12°4'N
12°N
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.10.1 Location of Veerapandi


Location of Veerapandi
GINGEE
VIKKIRAVANDI
Mazhavanthangal
Veerapandi - Mukkadichanparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Veerapandi
Nallapalayam
Udayanatham
Kandachipuram
KANDACHIPURAM
Nayanur
Devanur
Sittambur
VILLUPURAM
Thapovanam
Anthili
Mugaiyur
TIRUKKOYILUR
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Tirukkoyilur
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Villupuram
District Map
Study Area
Kandachipuram
Legend
Rock Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 544
Low : 0
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
12°4'N
12°N
0 0.5 1 2 kms

Map 4.10.2 Location of Veerapandi

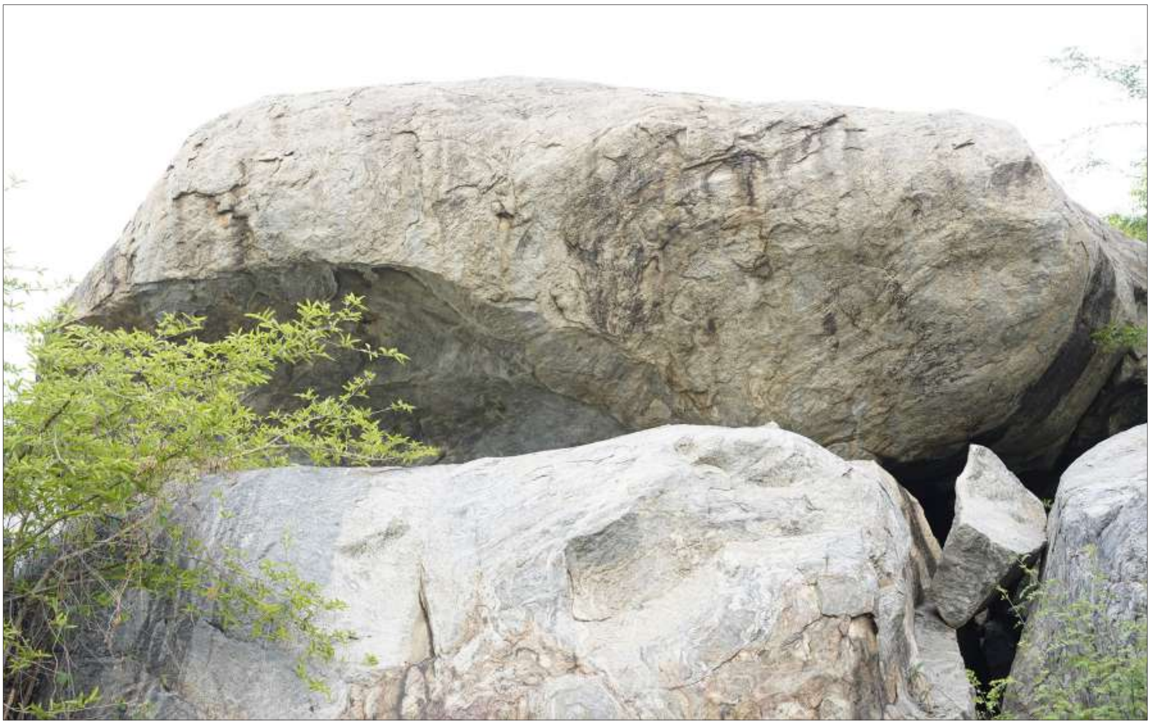


Fig. 4.10.1 General view of the rock shelter

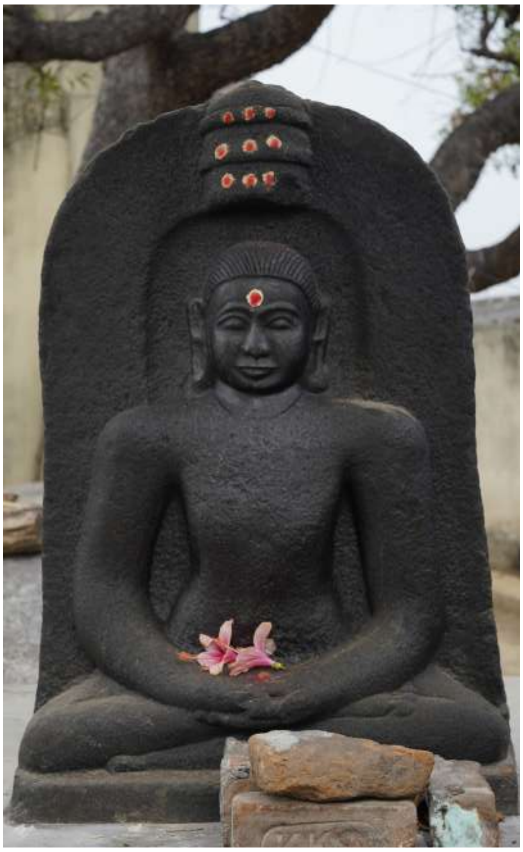


Fig. 4.10.2 Jain Tirthangara

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted rock surface is about 8 m, the total length of the rock shelter is about 7 m and the total height of the inclination of the rock surface is about 3 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 6 m. The total area of the painted surface is about 3.50x1.50 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

The images represented in the rock shelter consist of humans and tridents.

Panel Description

The rock shelter paintings are in white and red. The paintings are in a horizontal position. Some paintings are faded and not clearly visible. Five humans are marching and holding hands. They are all holding a

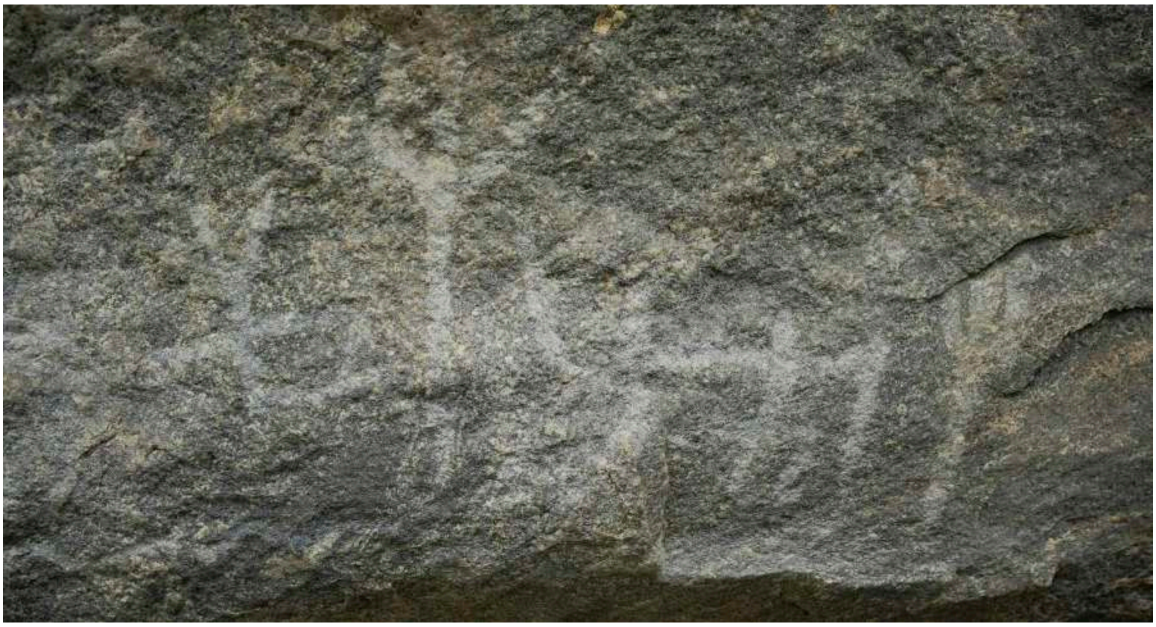


Fig. 4.10.3a Humans and trident

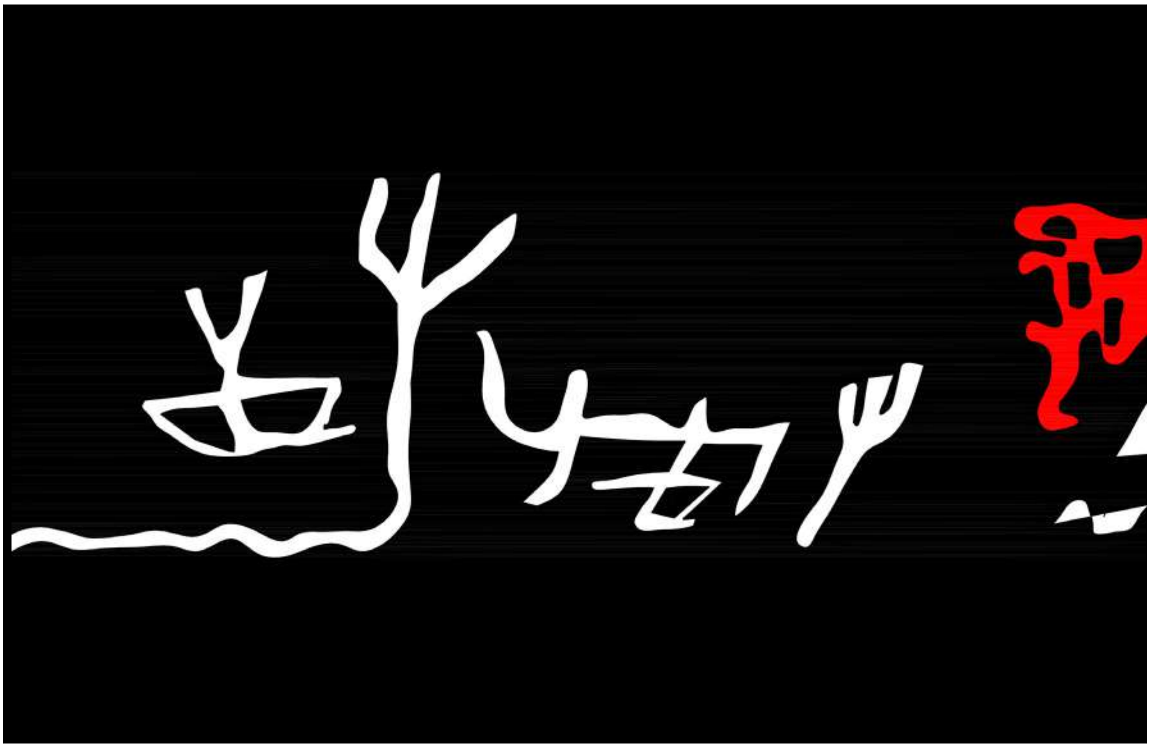


Fig. 4.10.3b Humans and trident

sword-like weapon and one man with raised hands. Two trident symbols were drawn and some small circles were painted close to the trident. Some unidentified paintings are in red ochre and not seen clearly (Fig. 4.10.3a-4.10.3b).

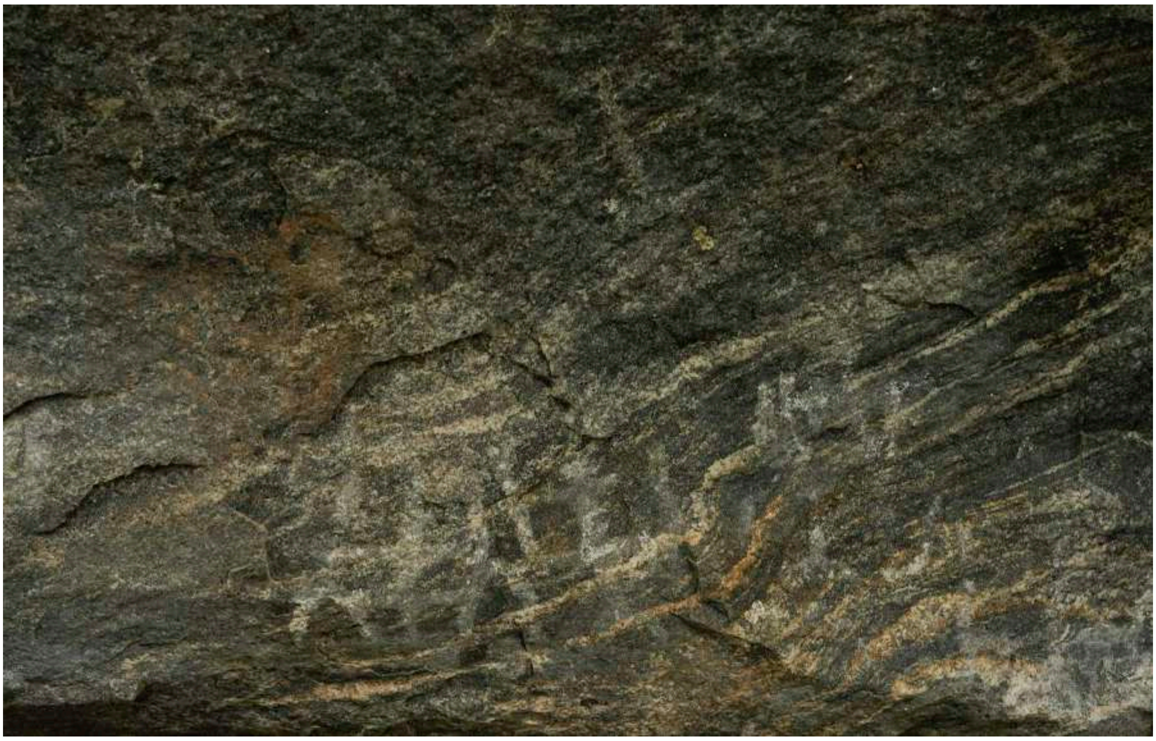


Fig. 4.10.4a Humans and trident

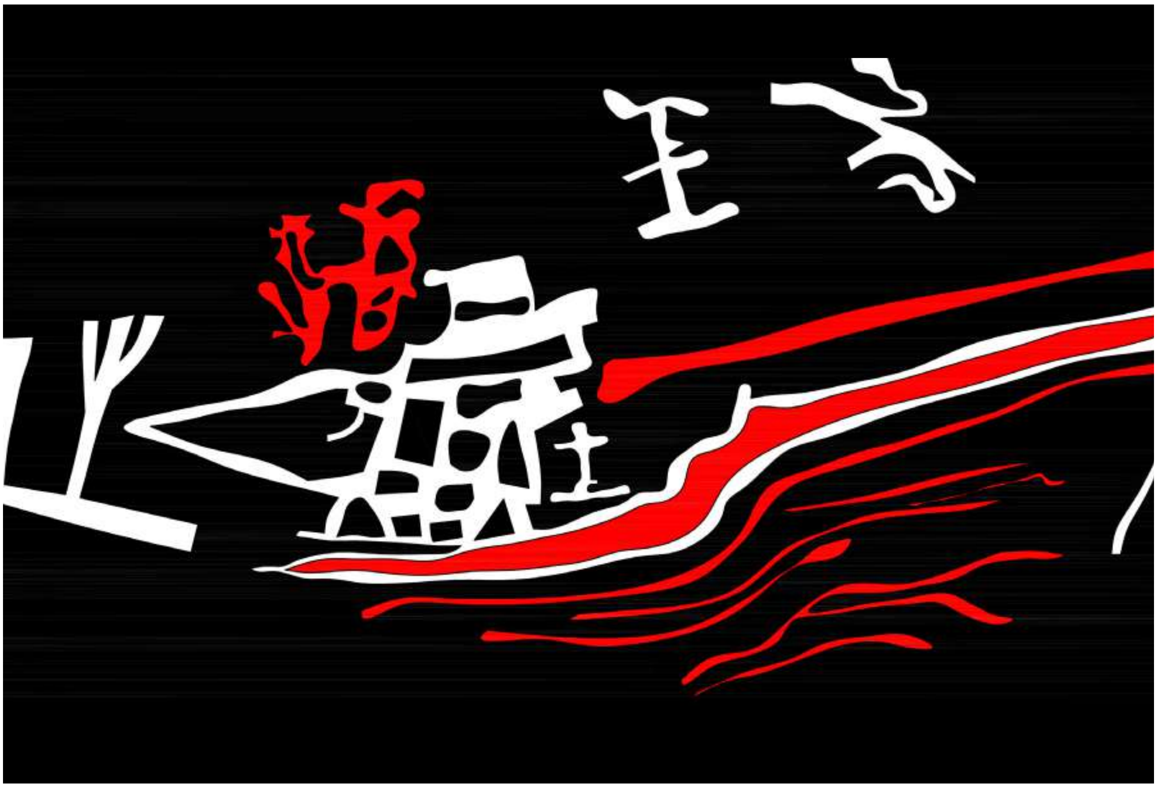


Fig. 4.10.4b Humans and trident

On the right side a human figure is drawn without-stretched arms and legs. Near to this a trident symbol was drawn (Fig. 4.10.4a-4.10.4b).

A trident-like sign is depicted in white colour. Hand-like signs placed above the trident (Fig. 4.10.5a-4.10.5b).

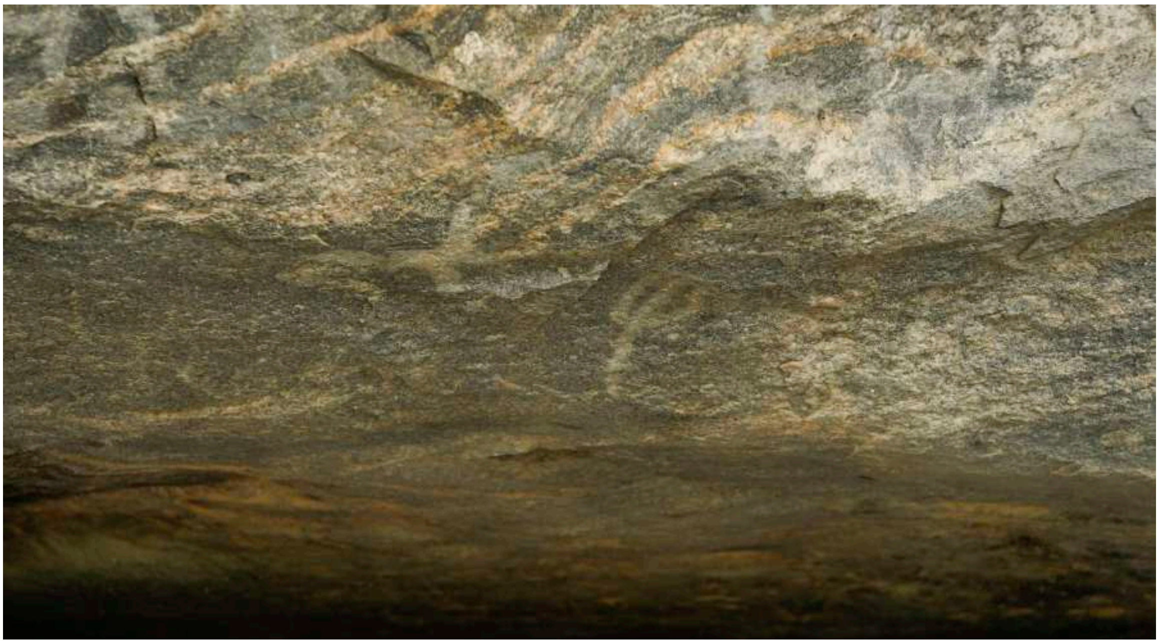


Fig. 4.10.5a Humans and trident

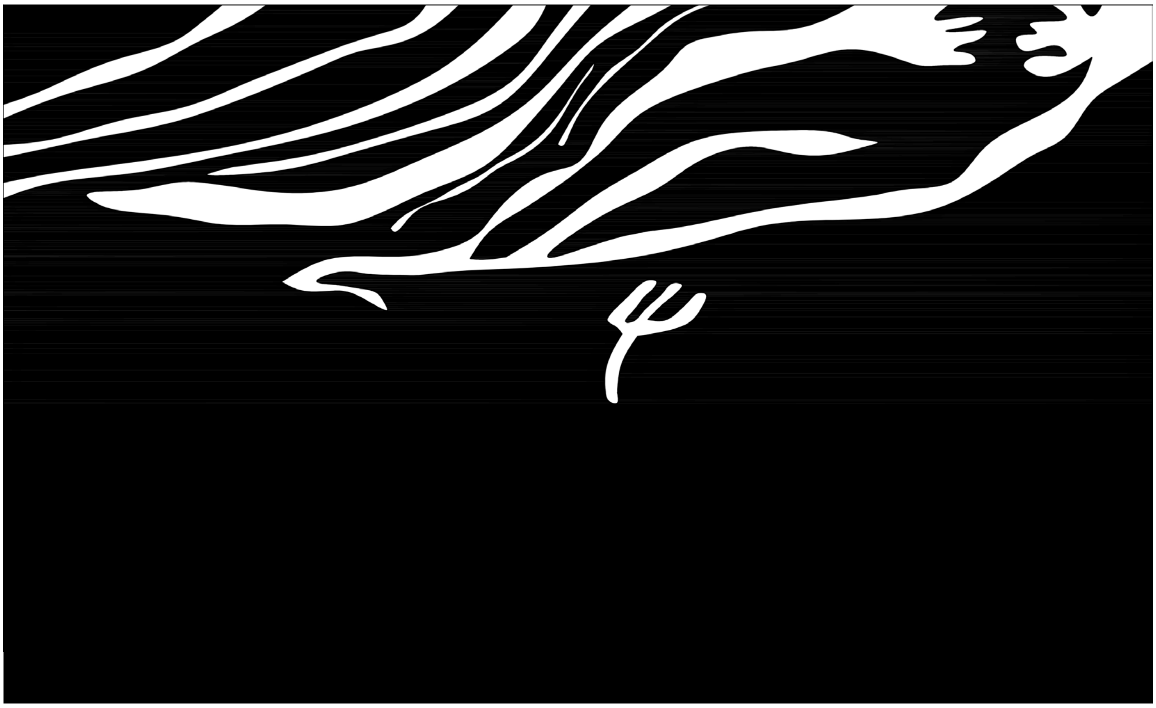


Fig. 4.10.5b Humans and trident

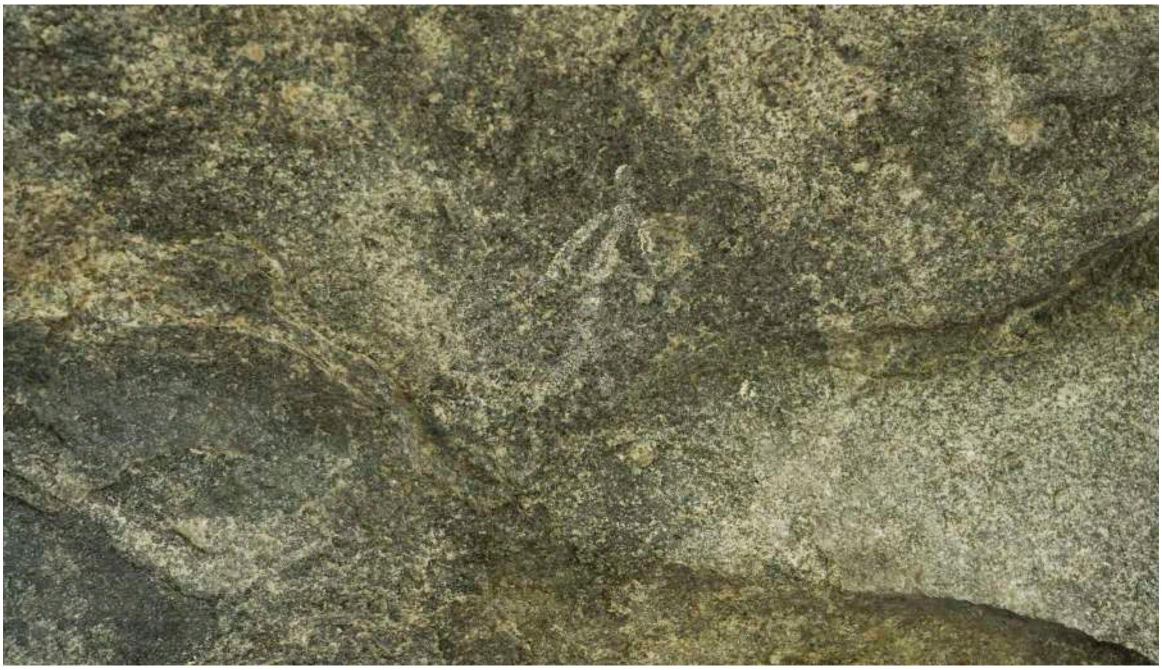


Fig. 4.10.6a Human

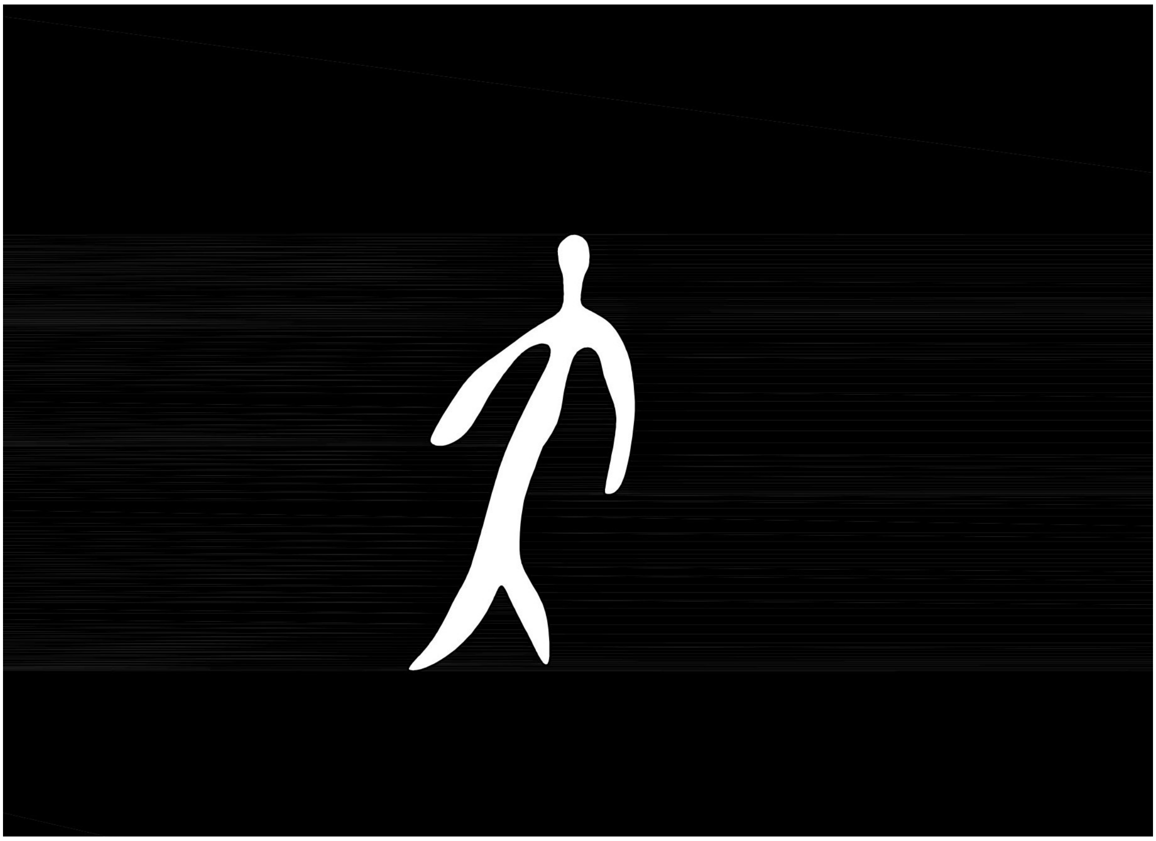


Fig. 4.10.6b Human

The rock shelter is painted with white pigments. A human figure is drawn. A man is walking from right to left side and his right-hand is holding a weapon like a sword (Fig. 4.10.6a-4.10.6b).

In this panel, paintings are in white pigment and two paintings are painted here. Two human figures without stretched arms and legs are shown in walking position (Fig. 4.10.7a-4.10.7b).

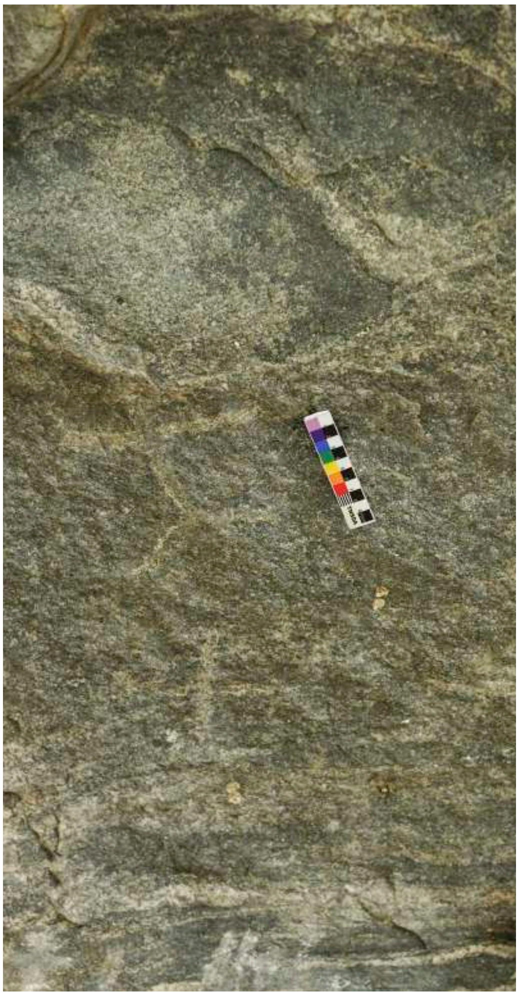


Fig. 4.10.7a Humans

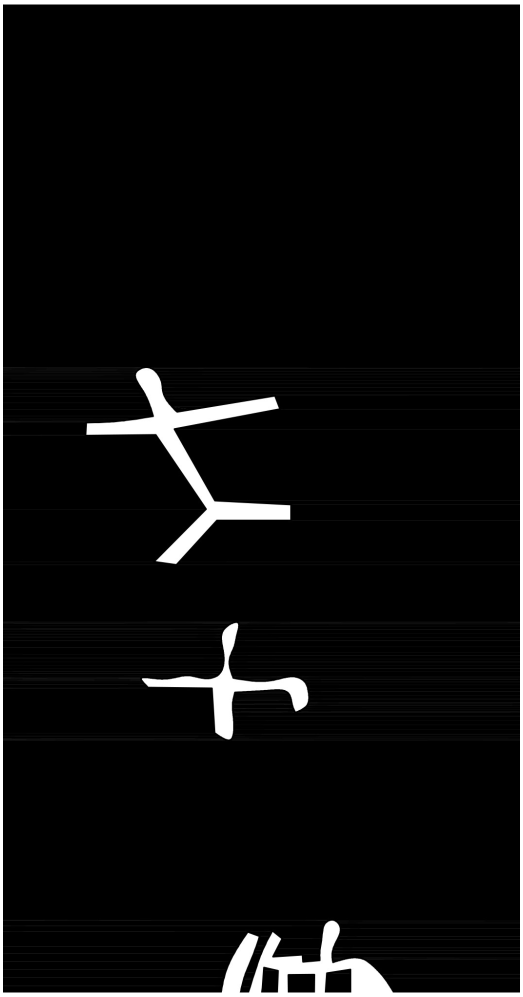


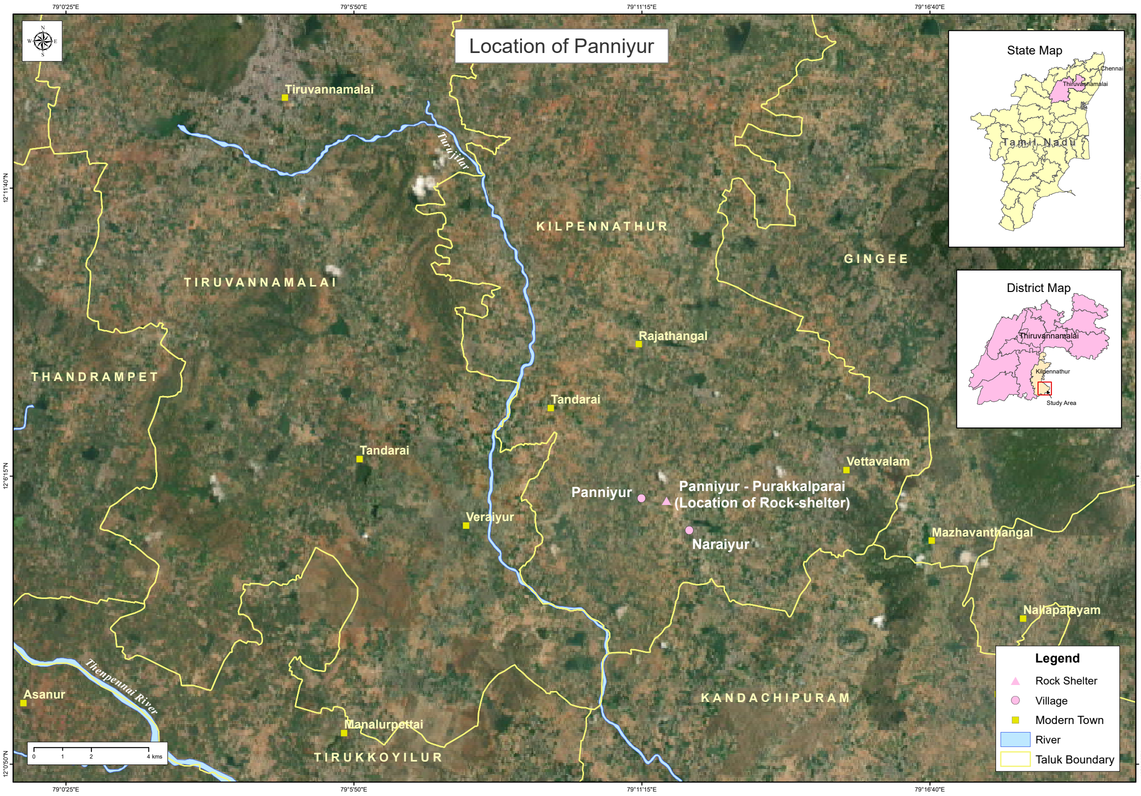
Fig. 4.10.7b Human

4.11 Panniyur

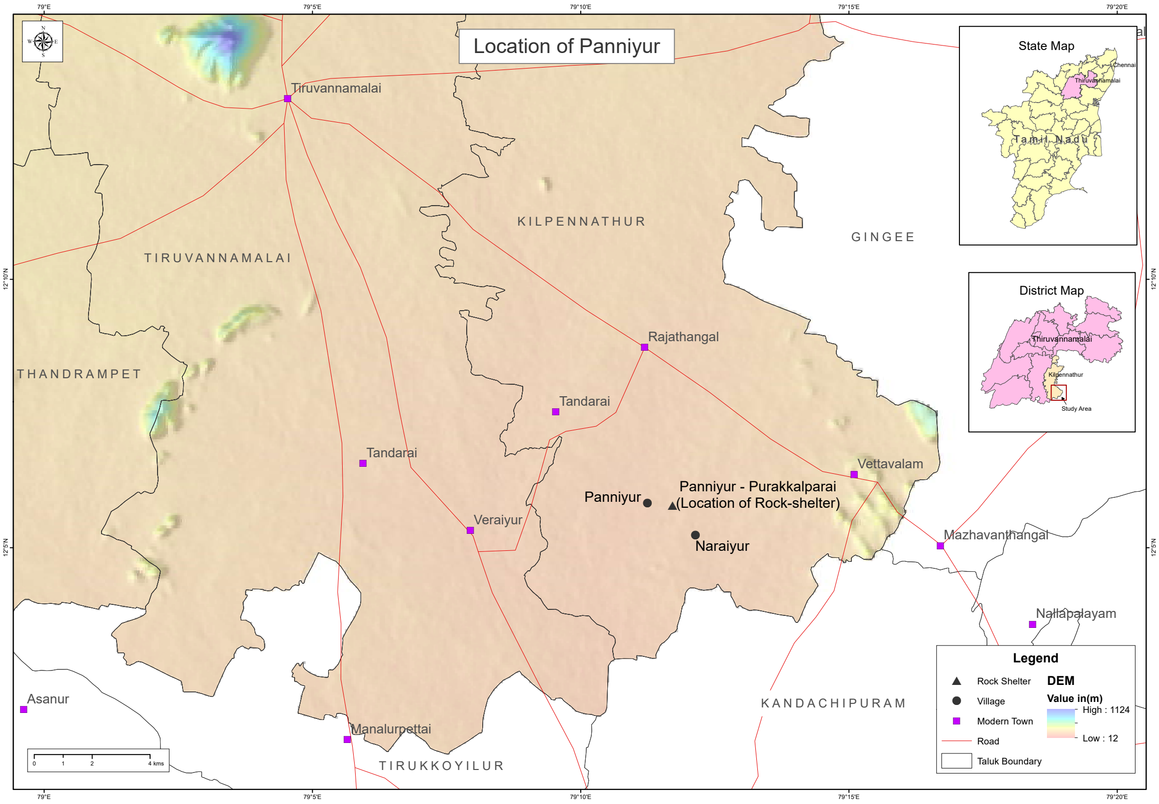
Panniyur (12.09647 N; 79.19520 E) lies 18 km to the north of Tirukkovilur on the Tirukovilur-Naraiyur road (Maps 4.11.1-4.11.2). The west-facing rock shelter locally called *Purakkalpaarai* has red paintings (Figs. 4.11.1-4.11.2). A goat is depicted prominently, below which another goat is depicted but only four legs are visible. An anthropomorphic-like figure is noticed close to it. A groove to prevent the flow of rainwater is found. Another rock shelter is noticed further 1 km to the north of this shelter. This north-facing rock shelter has paintings in red, mostly of cattle. A large number of megalithic stone circles are found in the vicinity.

Rock shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 7 m. The total length of the rock shelter is about 7 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 4.5 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 5 m. The total area of the painted surface is about 2x2.2 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Panniyur
Tiruvannamalai
KILPENNATHUR
GINGEE
TIRUVANNAMALAI
THANDRAMPET
Rajathangal
Tandarai
Tandarai
Vettavalam
Panniyur
Panniyur - Purakkalparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Veraiyur
Naraiyur
Mazhavanthangal
Nallapalayam
KANDACHIPURAM
Asanur
Thenpennai River
Manalurpettai
TIRUKKOYILUR
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Thiruvannamalai
Study Area
Legend
Rock Shelter
Village
Modern Town
River
Taluk Boundary

▸ *Map 4.11.1 Location of Panniyur*


Location of Panniyur
Tiruvannamalai
KILPENNATHUR
GINGEE
TIRUVANNAMALAI
THANDRAMPET
Rajathangal
Tandarai
Tandarai
Vettavalam
Panniyur
Panniyur - Purakkalparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Veraiyur
Naraiyur
Mazhavanthangal
Nallapalayam
KANDACHIPURAM
Asanur
Manalurpettai
TIRUKKOYILUR
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Thiruvannamalai
Study Area
Legend
Rock Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1124
Low : 12

▸ *Map 4.11.2 Location of Panniyur*

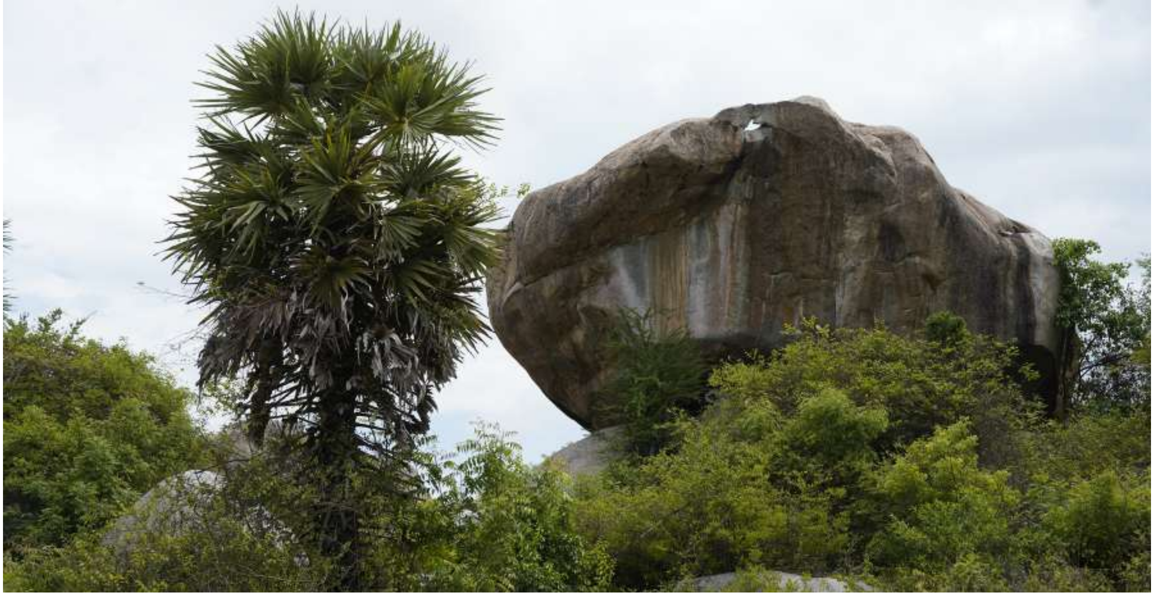


Fig. 4.11.1 General view of the rock-shelter

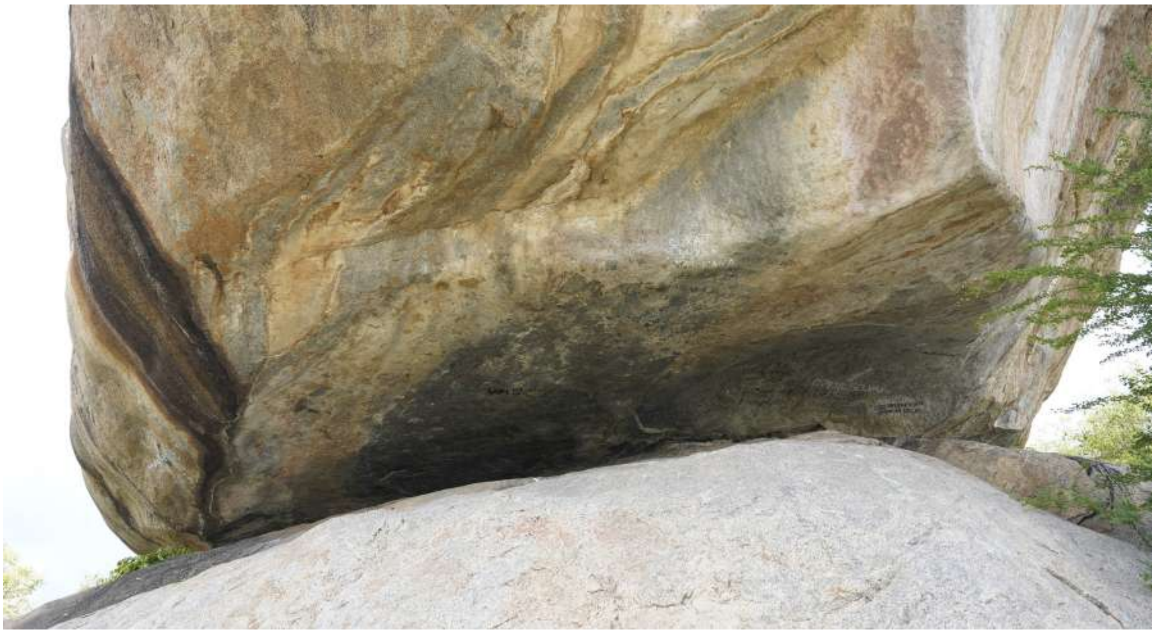


Fig. 4.11.2 General view of the rock-shelter

Description

The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of human and animal, geometrical lines and animal-like signs.

Panel description

This panel has red paintings of humans, animals and birds. An animal, probably a horse, is seen on the left side and a human figure stands nearby it. At the centre, an animal figure was drawn with a long body and long legs. A small bird is found

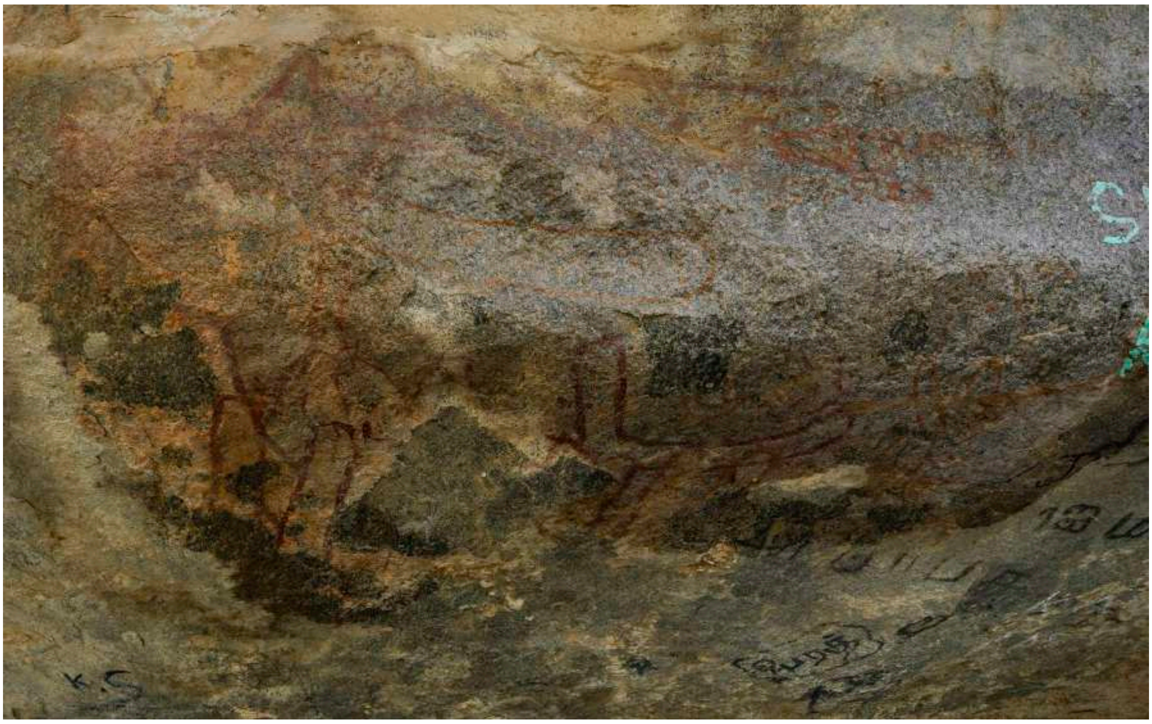


Fig. 4.11.3a Human and animal

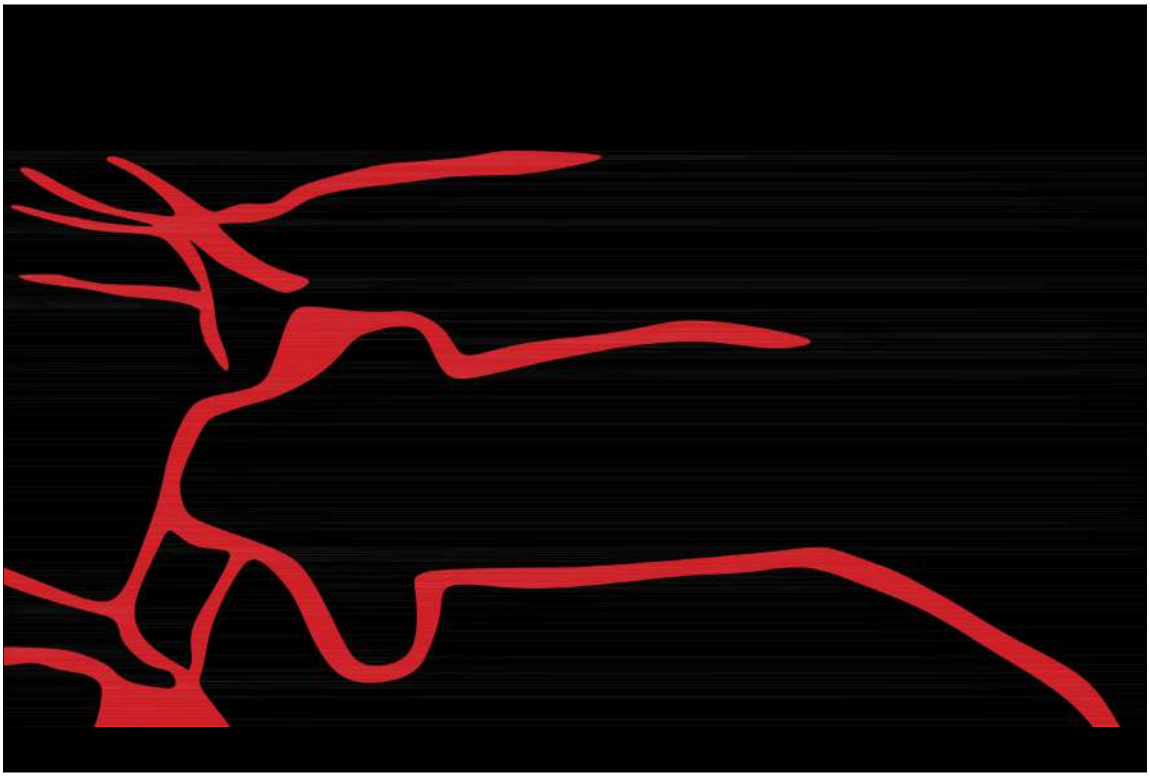


Fig. 4.11.3b Human and animal

besides the animal. A crocodile-like figure is found on the top of the panel. Cattle figures are found on either side of the panel. Paintings are not in a perfect shape (Figs. 4.11.3a-4.11.3b).

A single abstract linear symbol is here. It might be a depiction of a tree or any plant (Figs. 4.11.4a-4.11.4b).

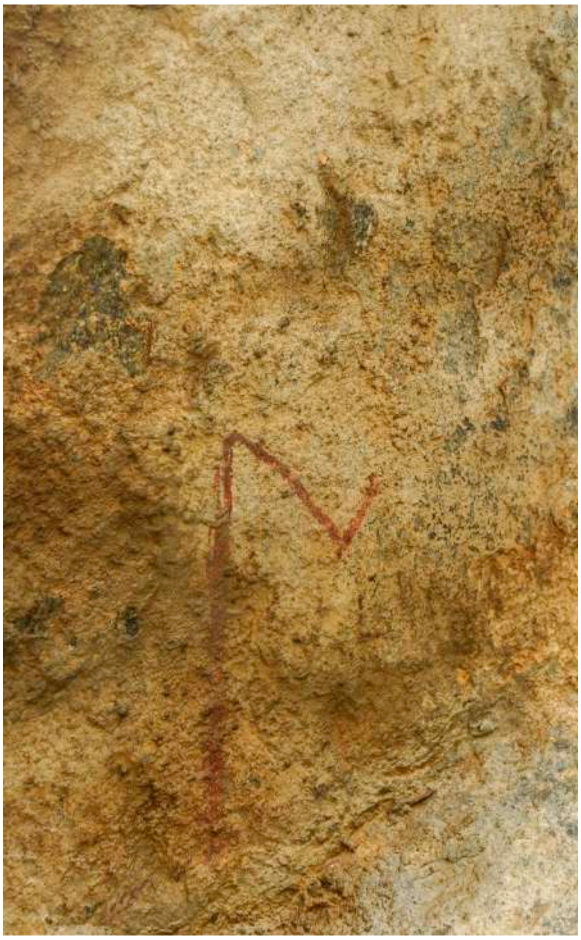


Fig. 4.11.4a A geometrical line

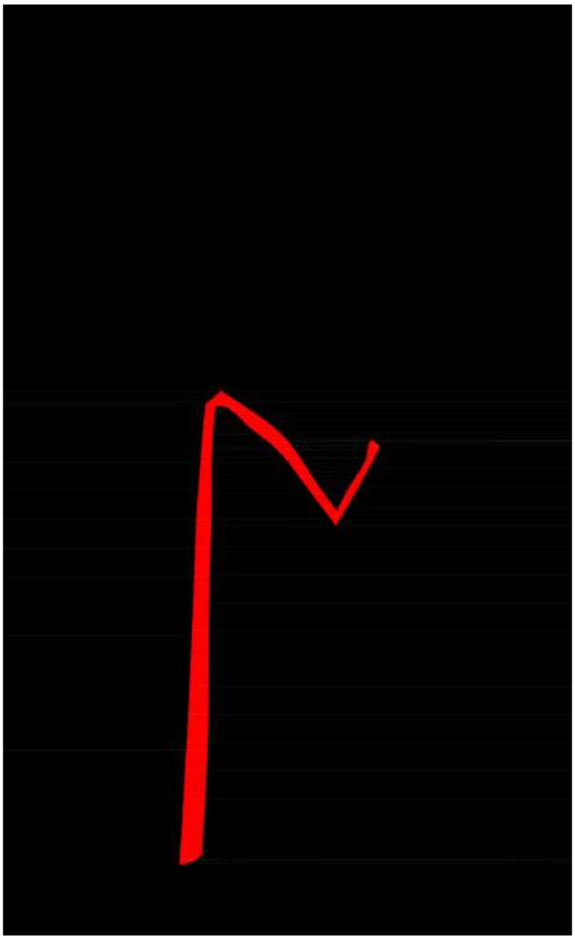


Fig. 4.11.4b A geometrical line

Animal figure resembling a dog or a cattle alongside a human figure facing left is seen. The animal figure was drawn standing on a rock, and looking forward because the front legs are a little above the hind legs. Above this animal, a flat-bodied reptile-like figure is found. Next to this on the right side, two birds are drawn which have long curvy bodies and necks. All the paintings are of red, some lines are faded and some figures are not clearly identifiable (Figs. 4.11.5a-4.11.5b).

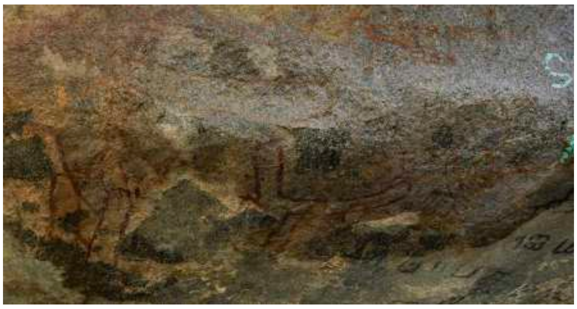


Fig. 4.11.5a Human and animal-like signs

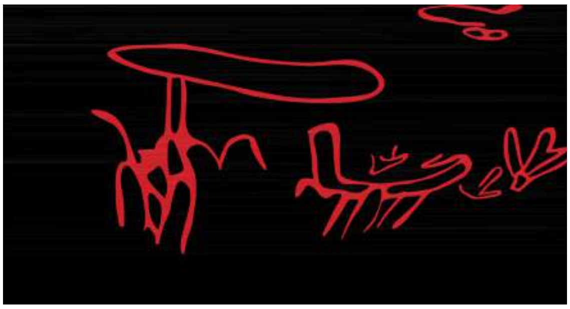


Fig. 4.11.5b Human and animal-like signs

An unidentifiable animal figure drawn in red ochre in an abstract nature (Figs. 4.11.6a-4.11.6b).

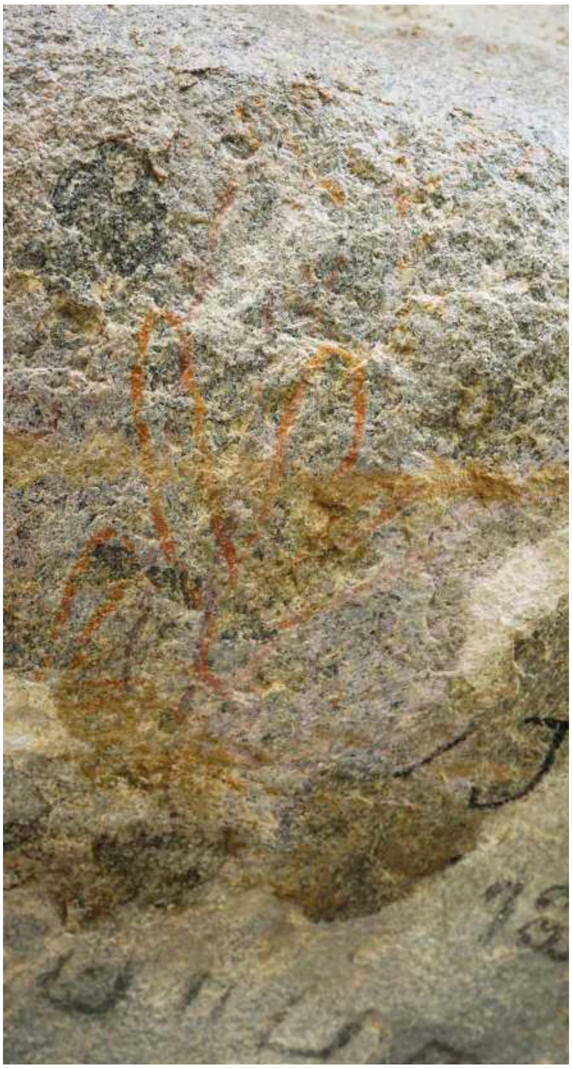


Fig. 4.11.6a Animal like sign

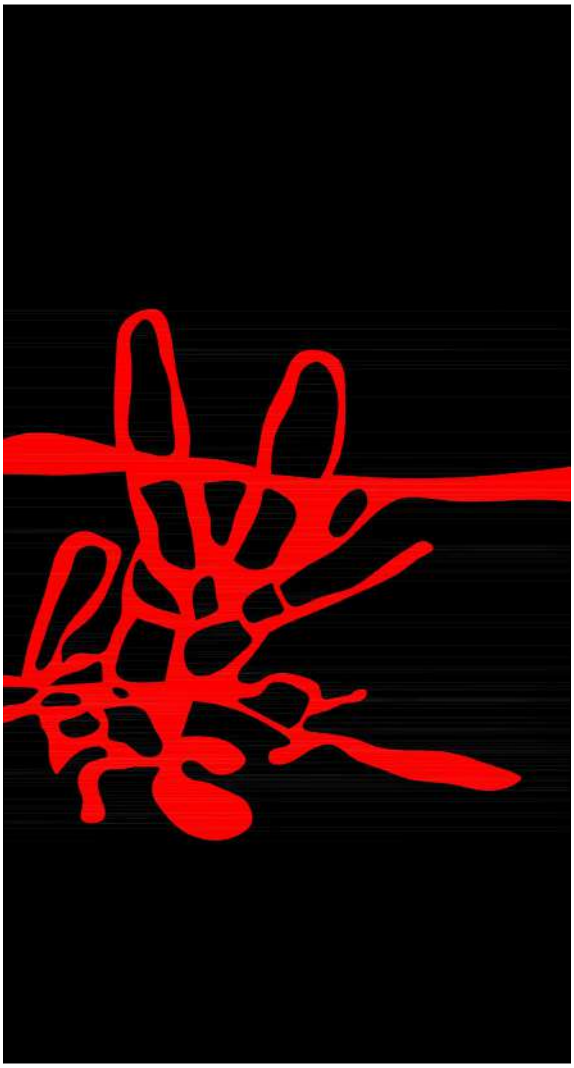
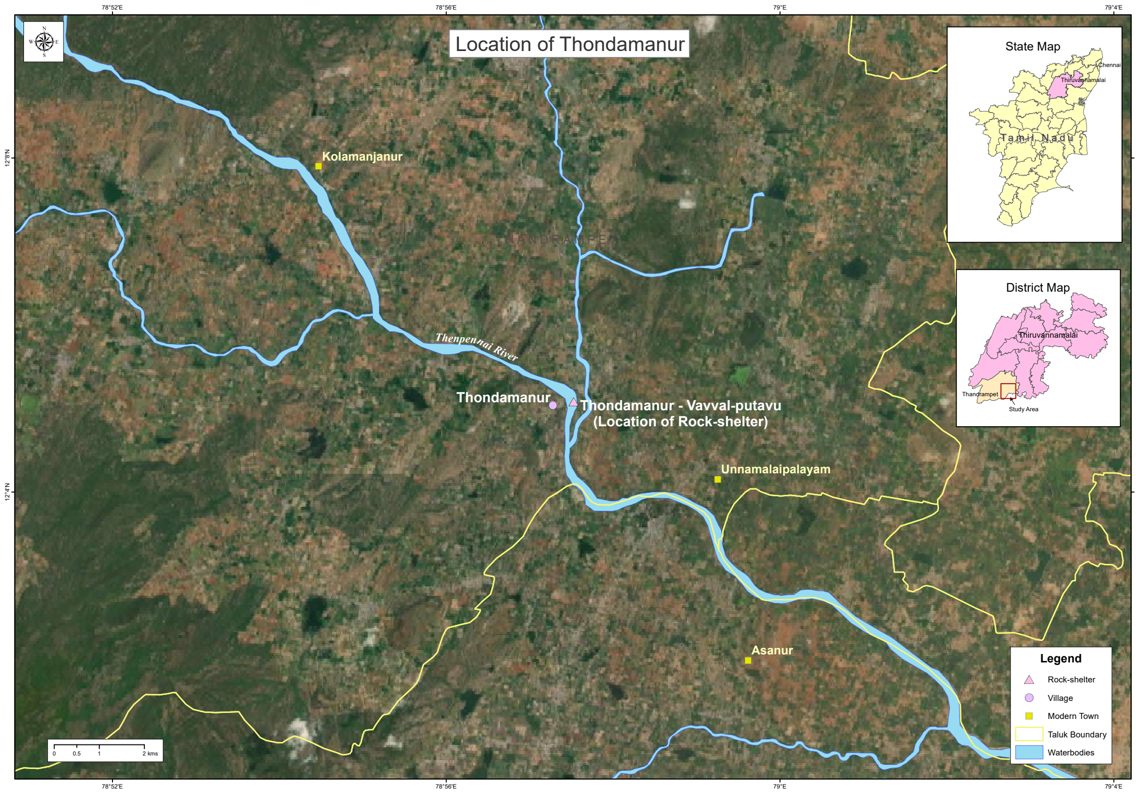


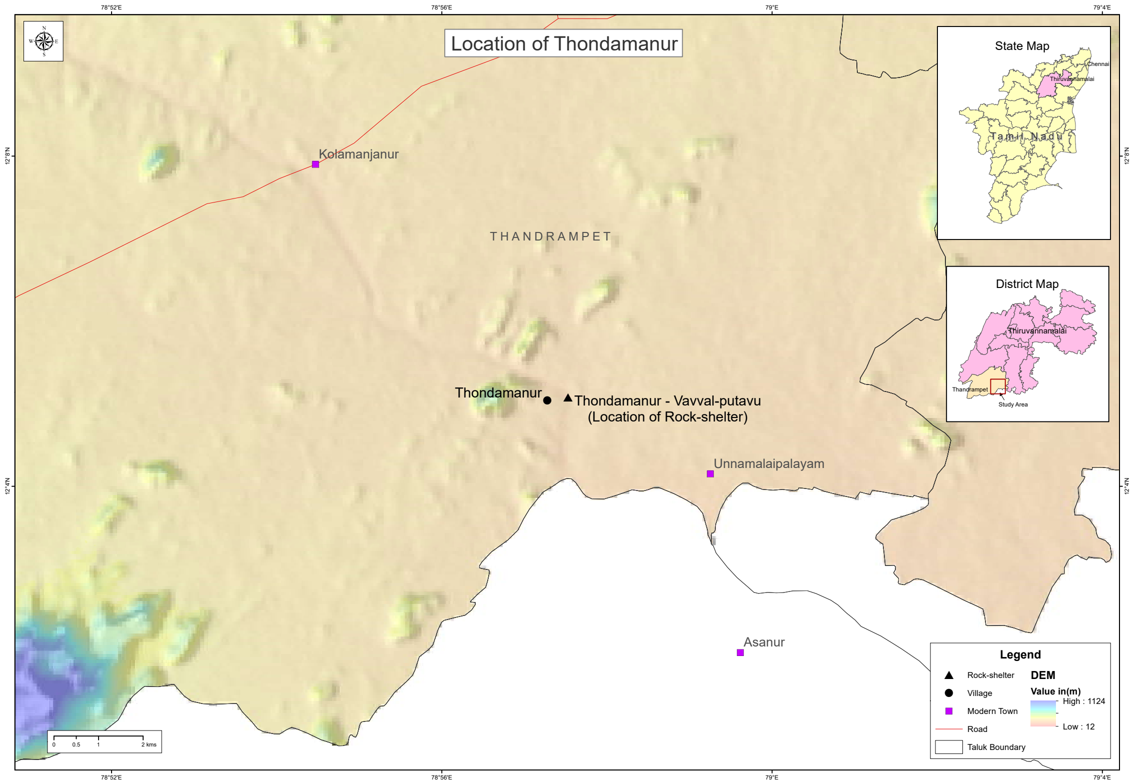
Fig. 4.11.6b Animal like sign

4.12 Thondamanur

Thondamanur (12.08397 N; 78.95463 E) lies 3.5 km away from Mungilturaipattu which lies 26 km from Tiruvannamalai and 40 km from Kallakurichchi on the Tiruvannamalai-Kallakurichchi road (Maps 4.12.1-4.12.2). Megalithic cairn circles entombing a cist with a porthole on the east and pit burials are noticed in a quarry area. The majority of the circles were disturbed due to intensive quarrying activities. One of the circles contains two menhirs called *annan-thambi-kal*. The huge menhir measuring about 5 m is partially broken and the other one has fallen to the ground which was of similar size (Rajan 1997:272). A memorial stone with a damaged sculpture called Vediyappan is noticed in the village. The inscription in Vatteluttu script issued during the reign of the Pallava king Simhavishnu (586 CE) refers to the skirmish in which the hero died *(erindu-pattan)* (Poongundran 1989).


Location of Thondamanur
Kolamanjanur
Thenpennai River
Thondamanur
Thondamanur - Vavval-putavu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Unnamalaipalayam
Asanur
State Map
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
78°52'E
78°56'E
79°E
79°4'E
12°8'N
12°4'N

Map 4.12.1 Location of the rock-shelter


Location of Thondamanur
Kolamanjanur
THANDRAMPET
Thondamanur
Thondamanur - Vavval-putavu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Unnamalaipalayam
Asanur
State Map
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1124
Low : 12
78°52'E
78°56'E
79°E
79°4'E
12°8'N
12°4'N

Map 4.12.2 Location of the rock-shelter

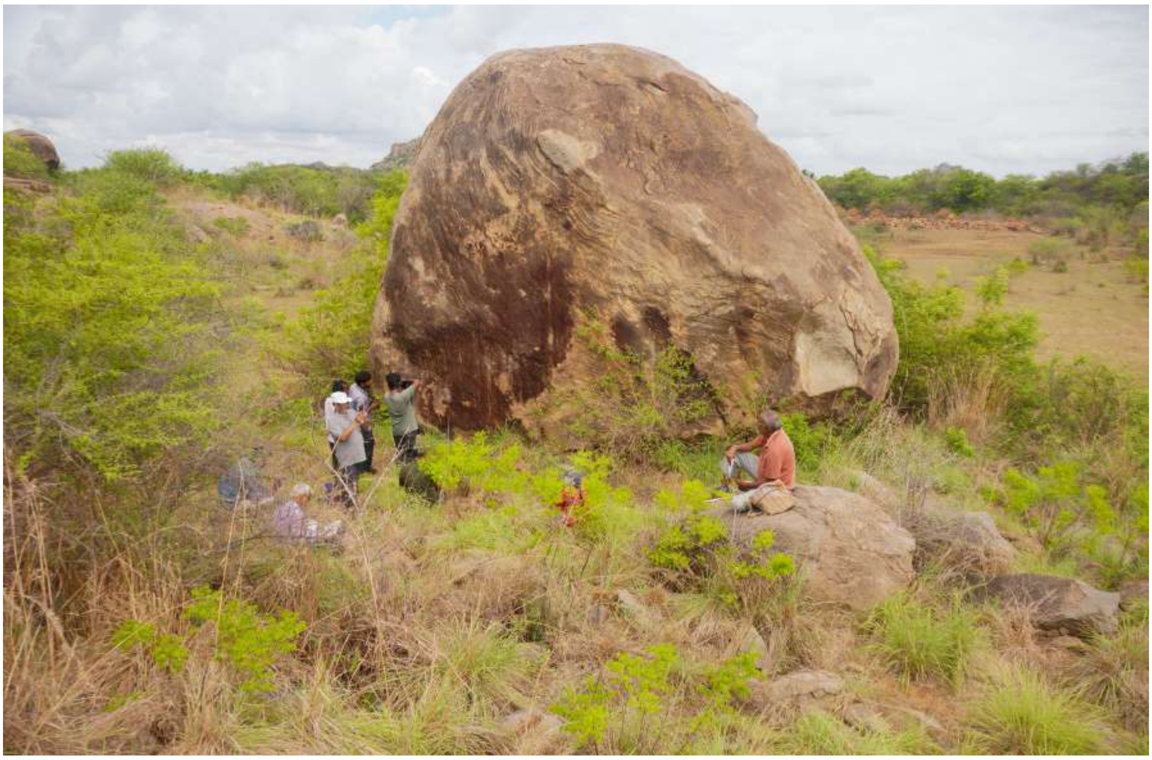


Fig. 4.12.1 General view of the rock-shelter

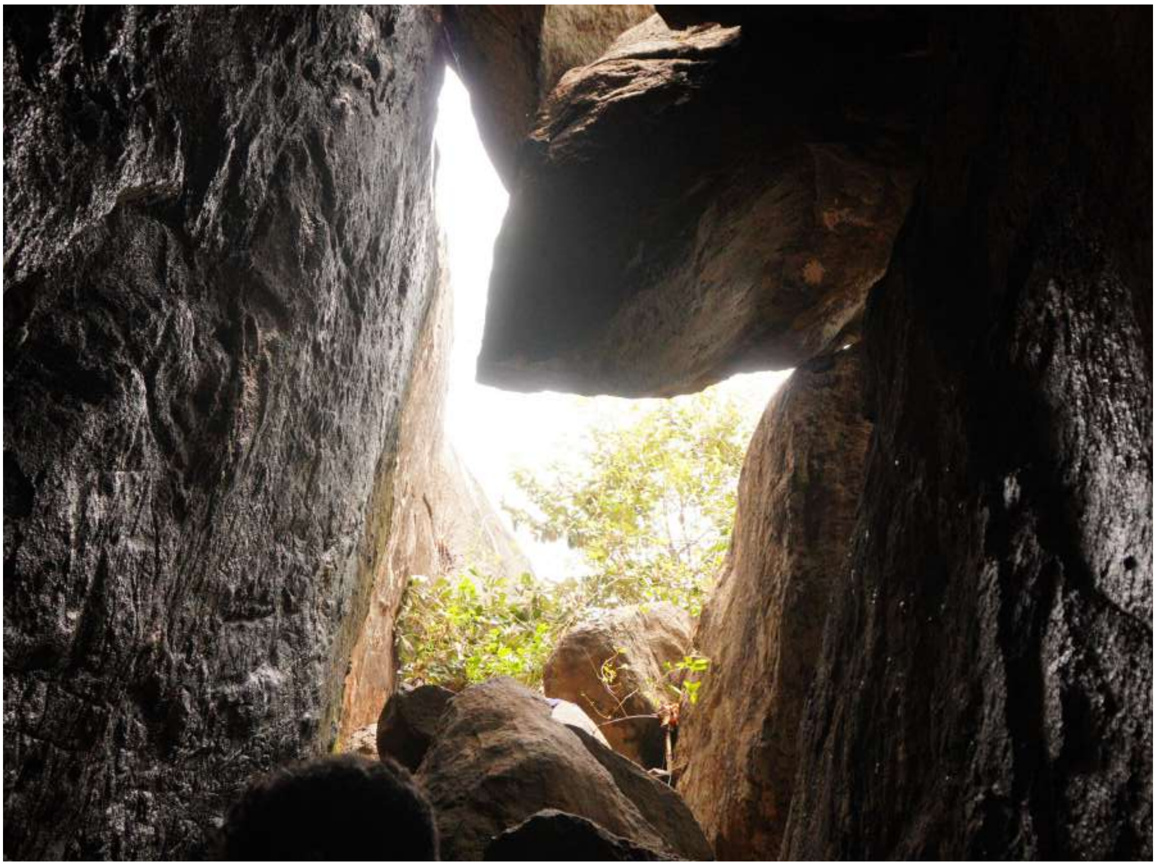


Fig. 4.12.2 General view of the rock-shelter

This is one of the well-known rock shelters of Tamil Nadu containing rock engravings. It is located on the hill called Sattapparai. The east-facing rock shelter called *vavval-putavu* is narrow. The approach to the shelter is also congested and it is very difficult to enter (Figs. 4.12.2-4.12.1).

There is another huge boulder called *Nagri-putavu* carrying the engravings is located close to the village. It contains several trident-like objects numbering more than 20. Human figures identical to the one observed at Perumukkal and Edakkal are also noticed.

Rock Shelter

The rock shelter has an engraved surface of about 6 m and the total length of the shelter is about 30 m and the total height of the inclined surface of the rocky surface is about 60 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2.30 m. The total engraved surface is about 4 m. The rock shelter has a total area of about 9x5 m.

Description

In Thondamanur, many drawings are deeply engraved. All are line drawings which include abstract symbols of geometric types and human figures. A square with vertical and horizontal lines; three vertical lines like an arrow and an elongated circle-like symbol with a diamond pattern inside are found. It may represent a ritual or a village-like scene rather than implied as symbols.

The symbols found include square, rectangle, arrow, criss-cross, trident etc. and multiple combinations of geometric symbols.

Panel Description

In this narrow cave, a few carvings are made. Mostly straight lines, baselines, vertical lines, horizontal lines, triangles and square-like forms are found. Besides the old carvings, and a few modern Tamil letters are also found in the cave as part of vandalism. At the same time, a few human figures are also seen in deep carvings, and some forms of reveal motifs of animal life (Figs. 4.12.3a-4.12.3b).

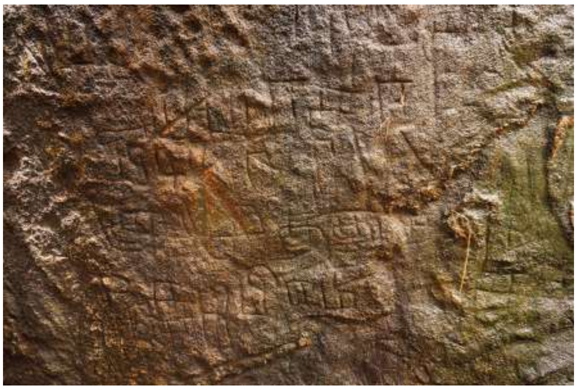


Fig. 4.12.3a Petroglyphs with Tamil letters

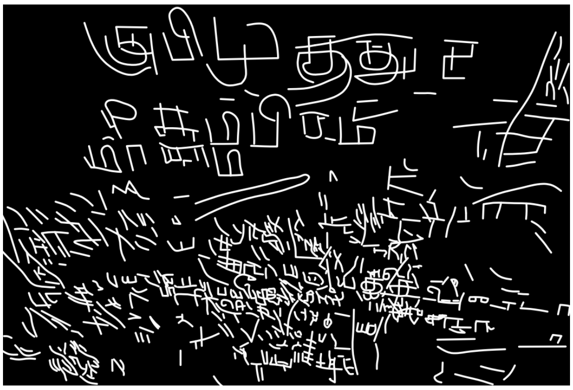


Fig. 4.12.3b Petroglyphs with Tamil letters

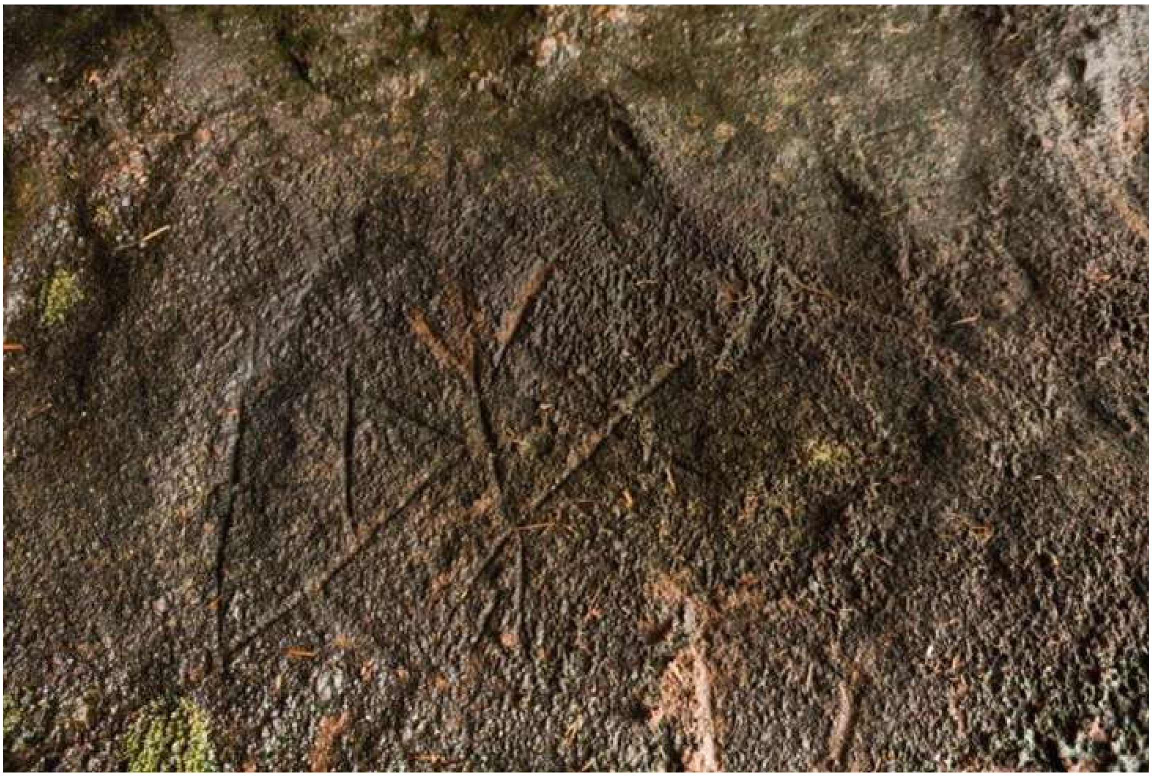


Fig. 4.12.4a Triangle and trident-like petroglyphs

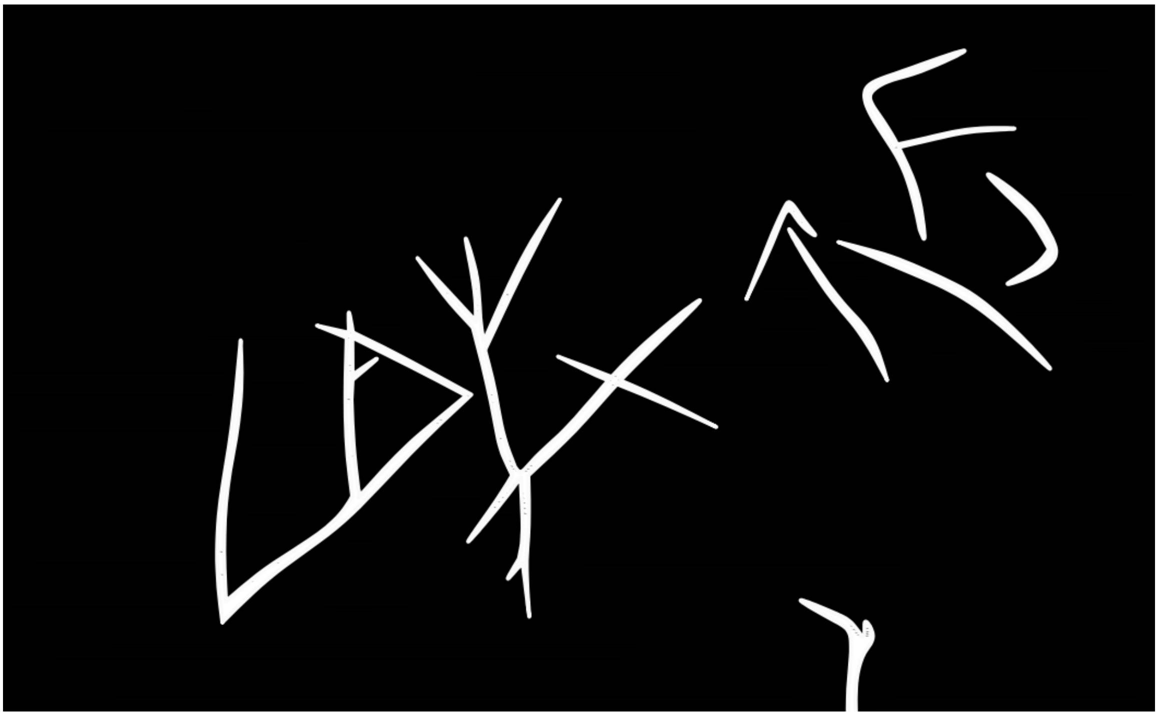


Fig. 4.12.4b Triangle and trident-like petroglyphs

A triangle with a single horizontal line is engraved, overlapping the latter, a tree-like symbol is engraved, indicating floral representation (Figs. 4.12.4a-4.12.4b).

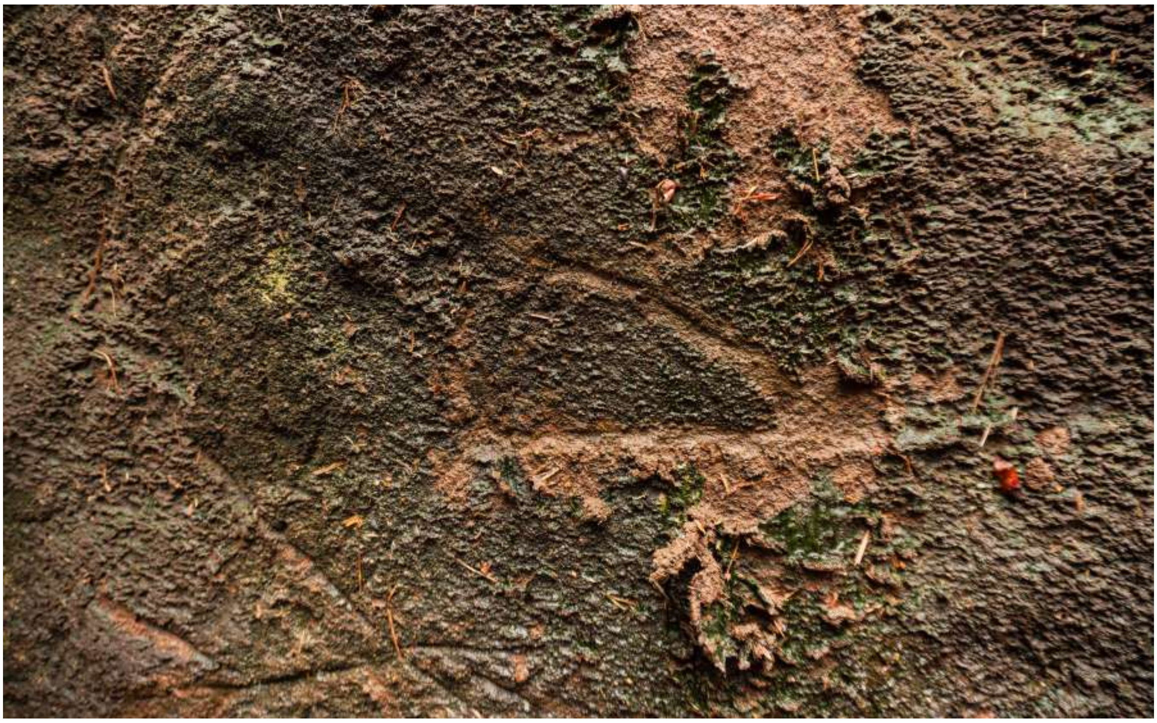


Fig. 4.12.5a Triangle petroglyphs

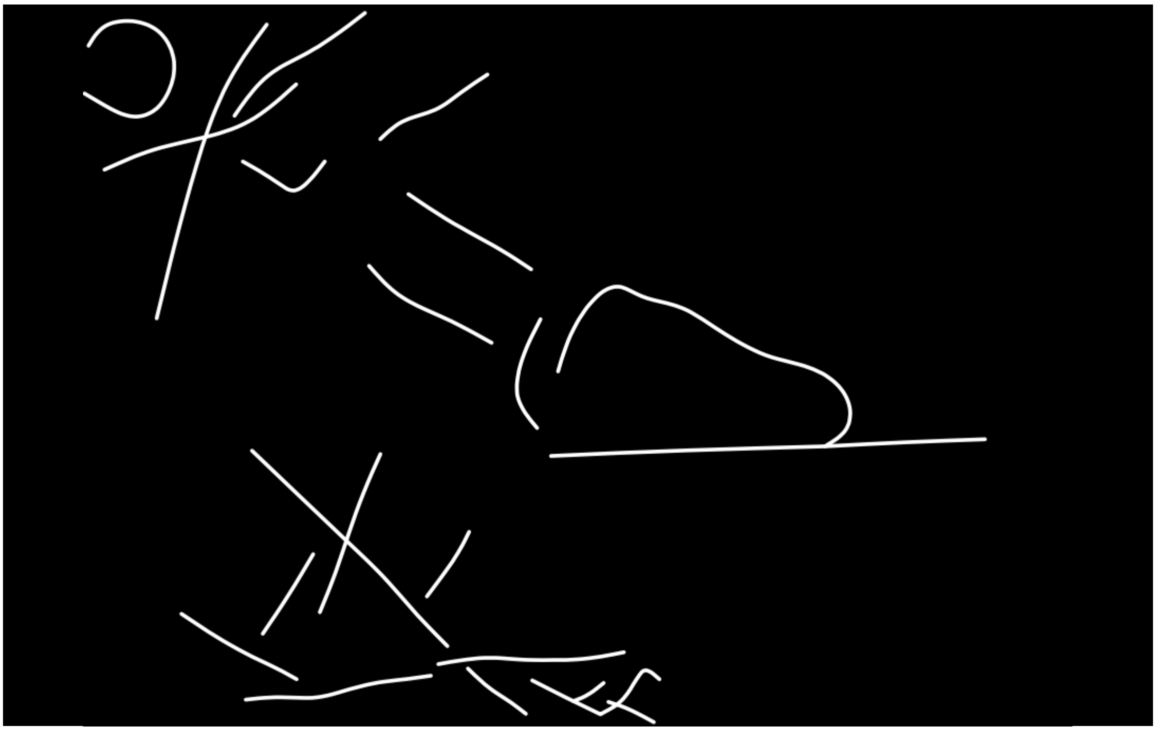


Fig. 4.12.5b Triangle petroglyphs

In the panel, a human-like figure is seen in a walking posture with raised hands. In front of his legs, a few geometrical patterns are carved (Figs. 4.12.5a-4.12.5b).

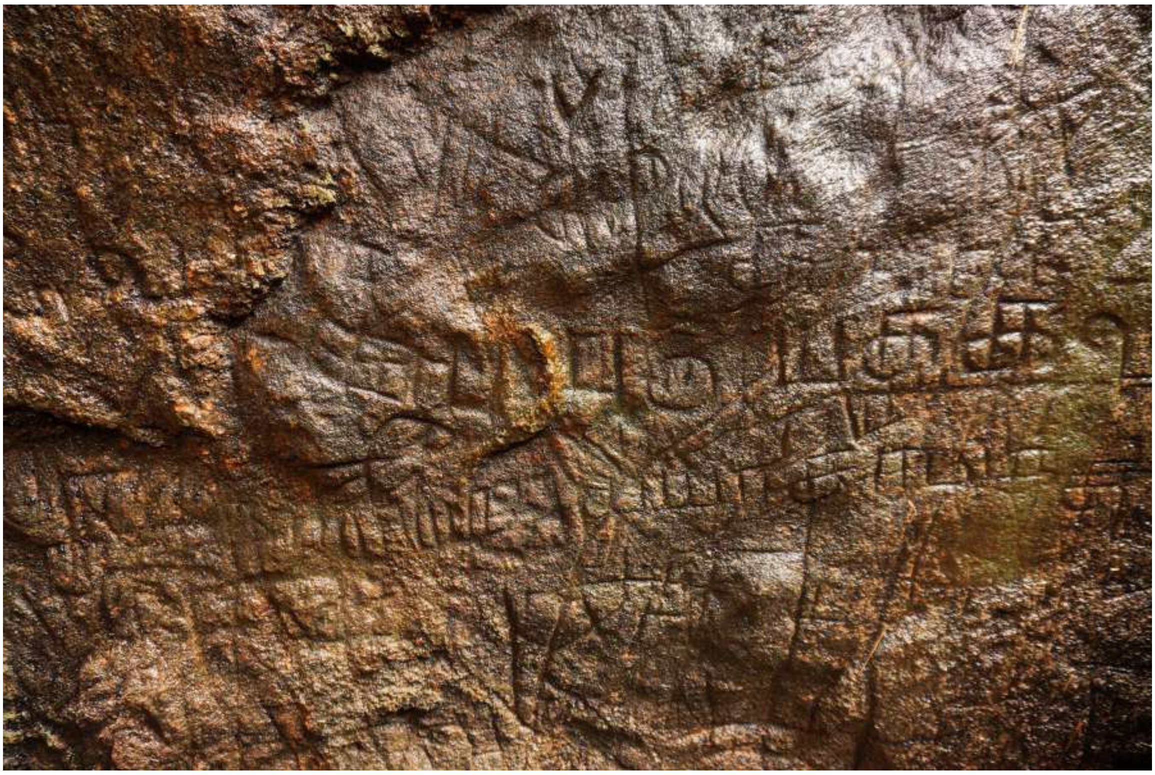


Fig. 4.12.6a Tamil petroglyphs

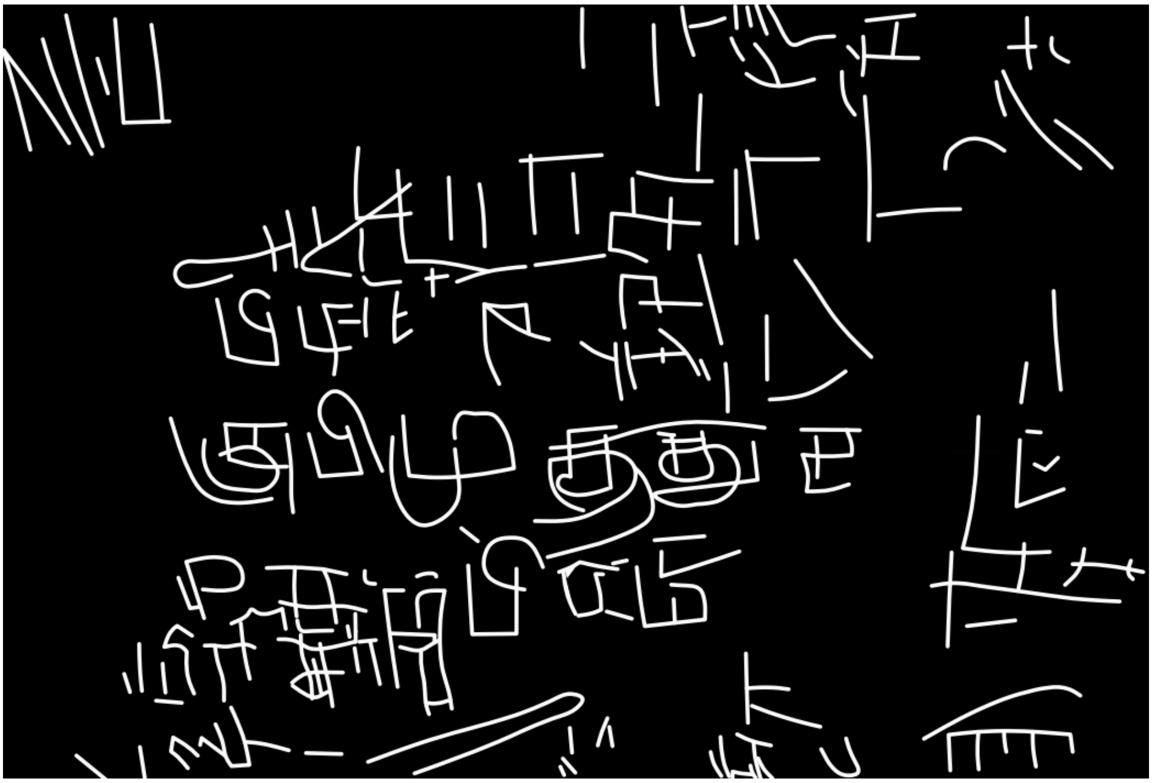


Fig. 4.12.6b Tamil petroglyphs

A triangle and square symbols divided into four boxes, symbol like English letter E" and an arrow facing up and also right direction are noticed, three square-like geometrical symbols devoid of bottom are observed (Figs. 4.12.6a-4.12.6b).

Both scripts and symbols are present. Different types of arrows, trident symbols, double slanting lines, bow and arrows and a straight line with many vertical lines could be seen. Two cross lines, some ritual symbols, a diamond pattern, a long vertical line with extension of three slanting lines on the top and two on the below were observed (Figs. 4.12.7a-4.12.7b).

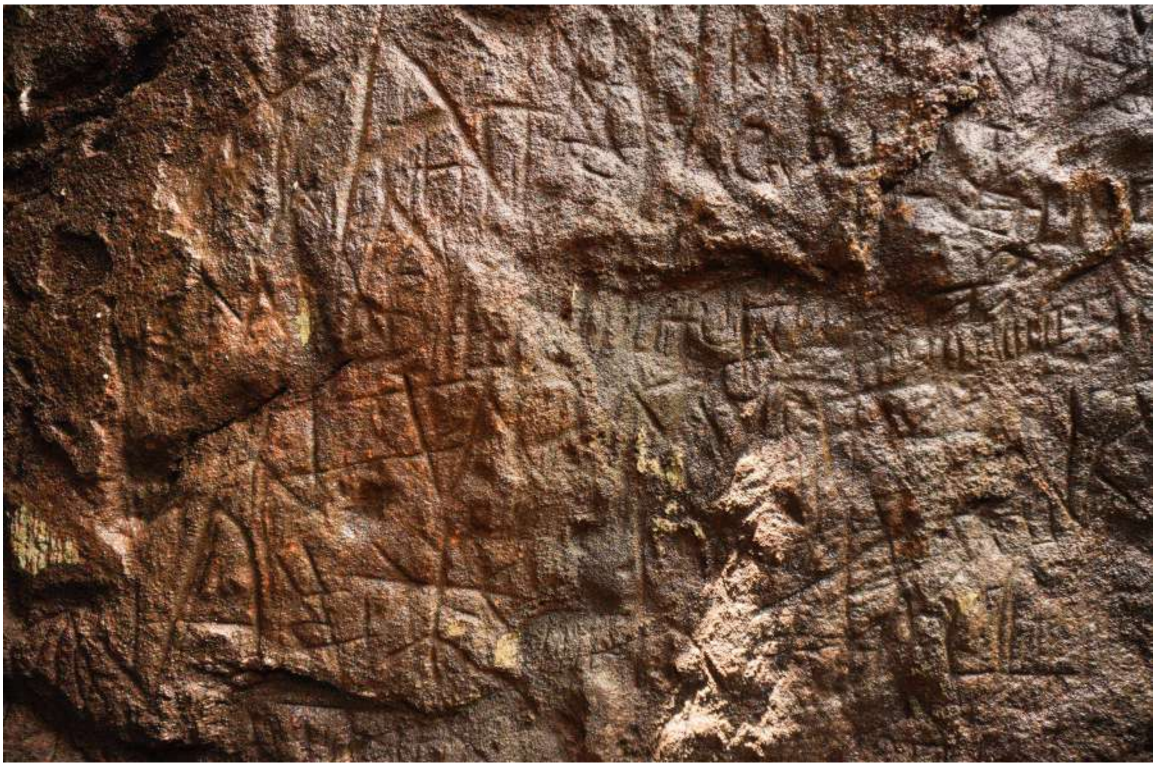


Fig. 4.12.7a Tamil and lines petroglyphs

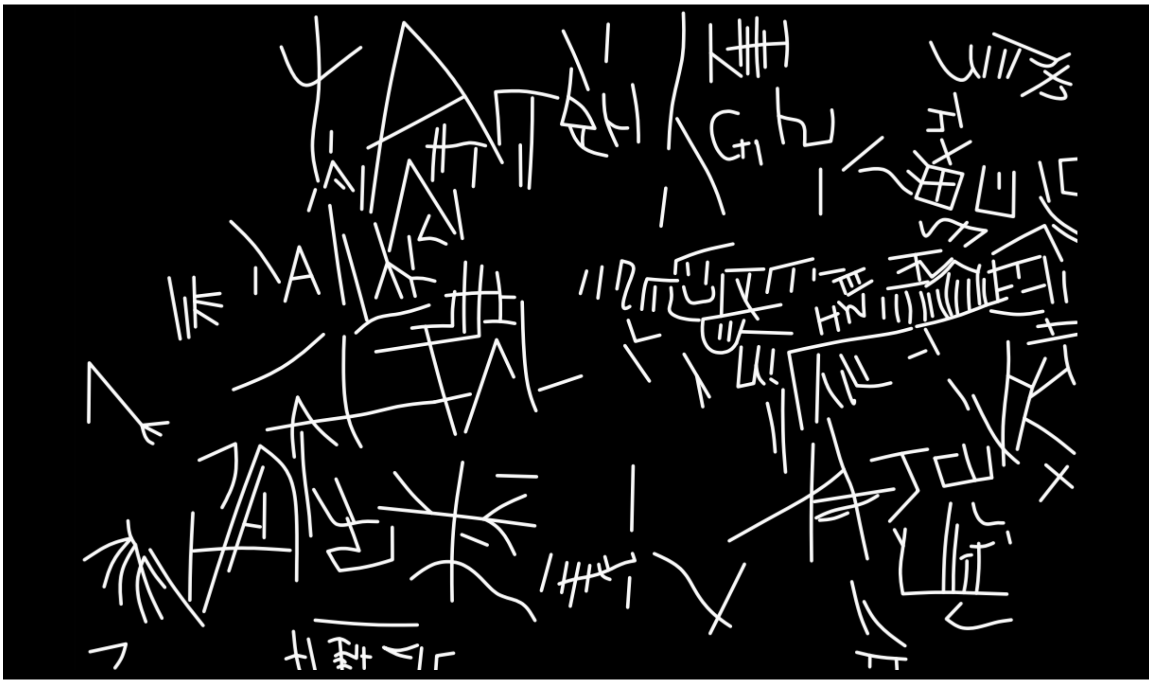


Fig. 4.12.7b Tamil and lines petroglyphs

The engraving shows four humans in line drawing walking with outstretched hands and legs. The size of human figures varies in size (Figs. 4.12.8a-4.12.8b).

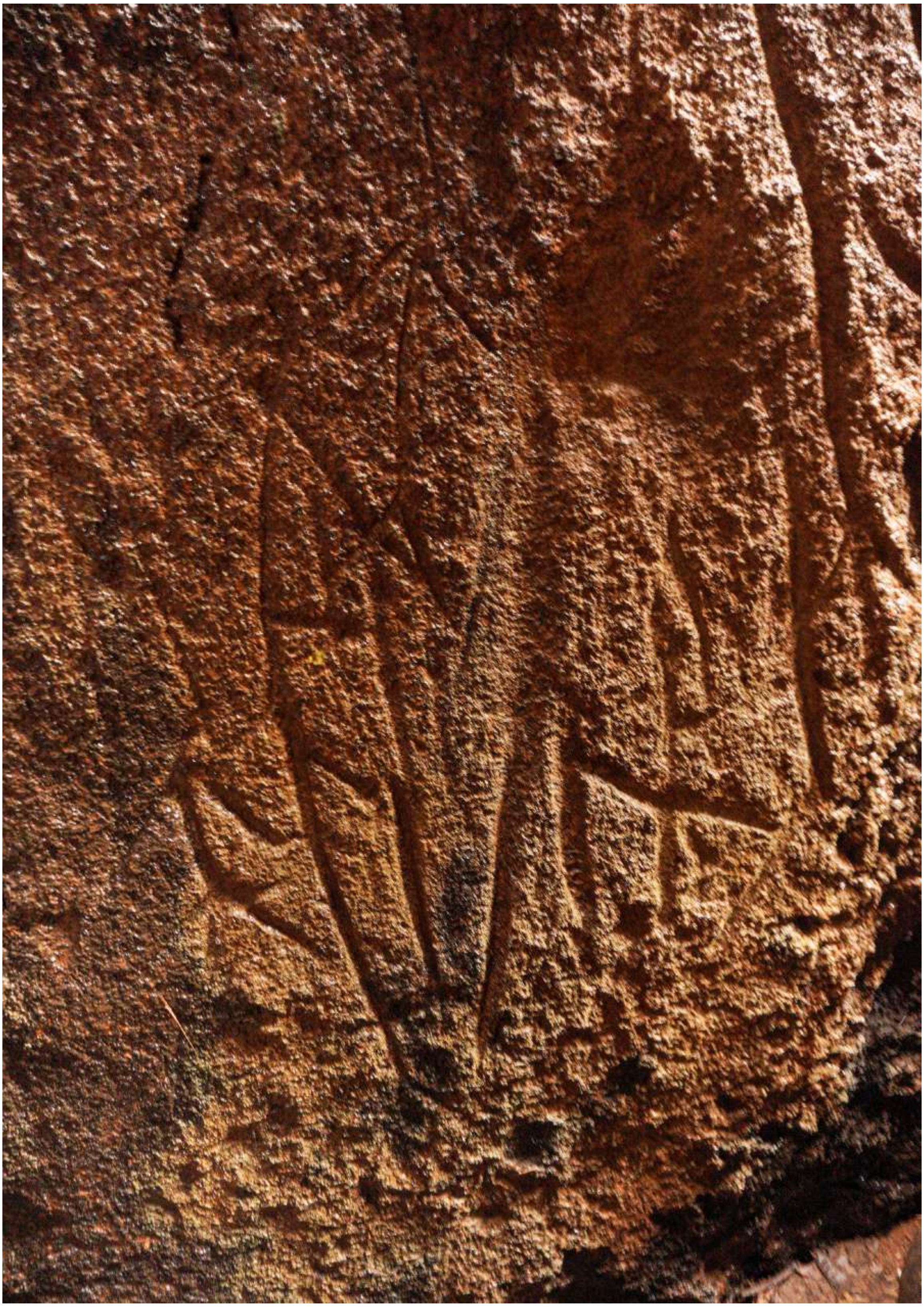


Fig. 4.12.8a Lines and human like petroglyphs

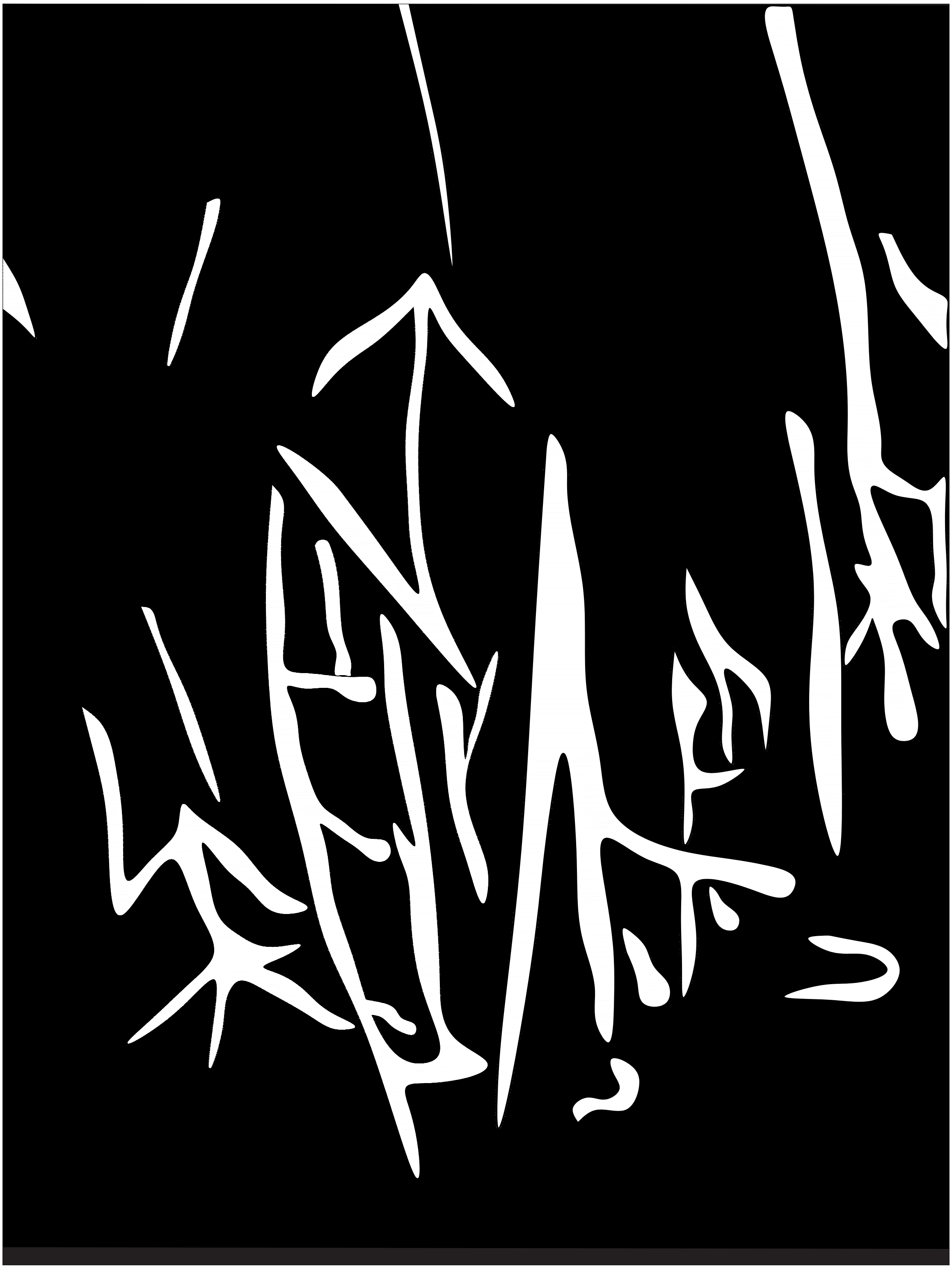


Fig. 4.12.8b Lines and human like petroglyphs

A human figure is found in the centre in an inverted position. Left of this figure an arrow-like symbol is drawn facing up and two small holes are present on either side of the legs of the human figure. There are two holes which are called cup marks or cupules. Above this human figure, an animal figure was drawn with the extension of a double line (Figs. 4.12.9a-4.12.9b).

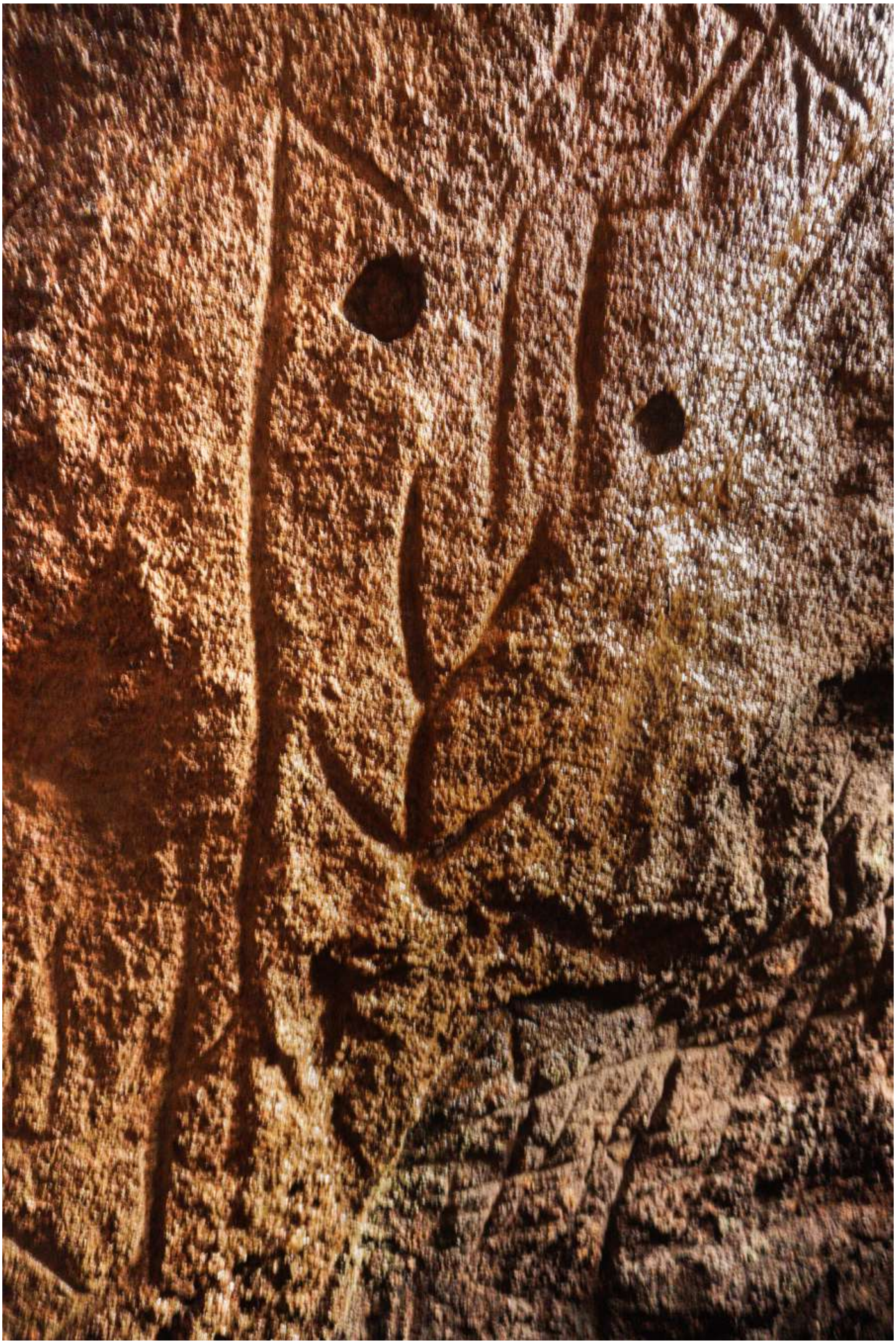


Fig. 4.12.9a Arrow and human petroglyphs

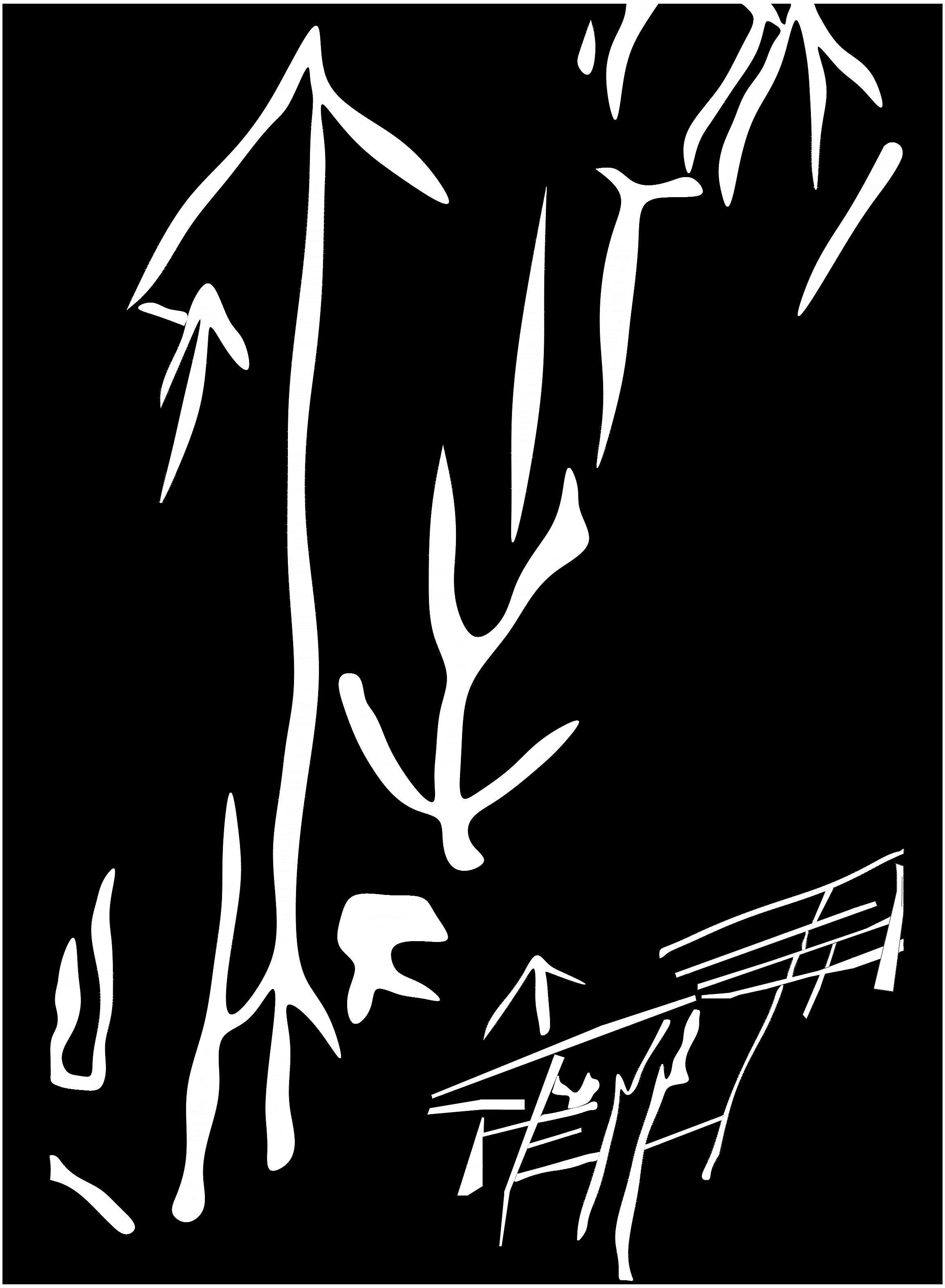


Fig. 4.12.9b Arrow and human petroglyphs

It is densely drawn with horizontal and vertical lines. They could represent a tool used for hunting, such as a net, or it might depict a structure, like a hut (Figs. 4.12.10a-4.12.10b).

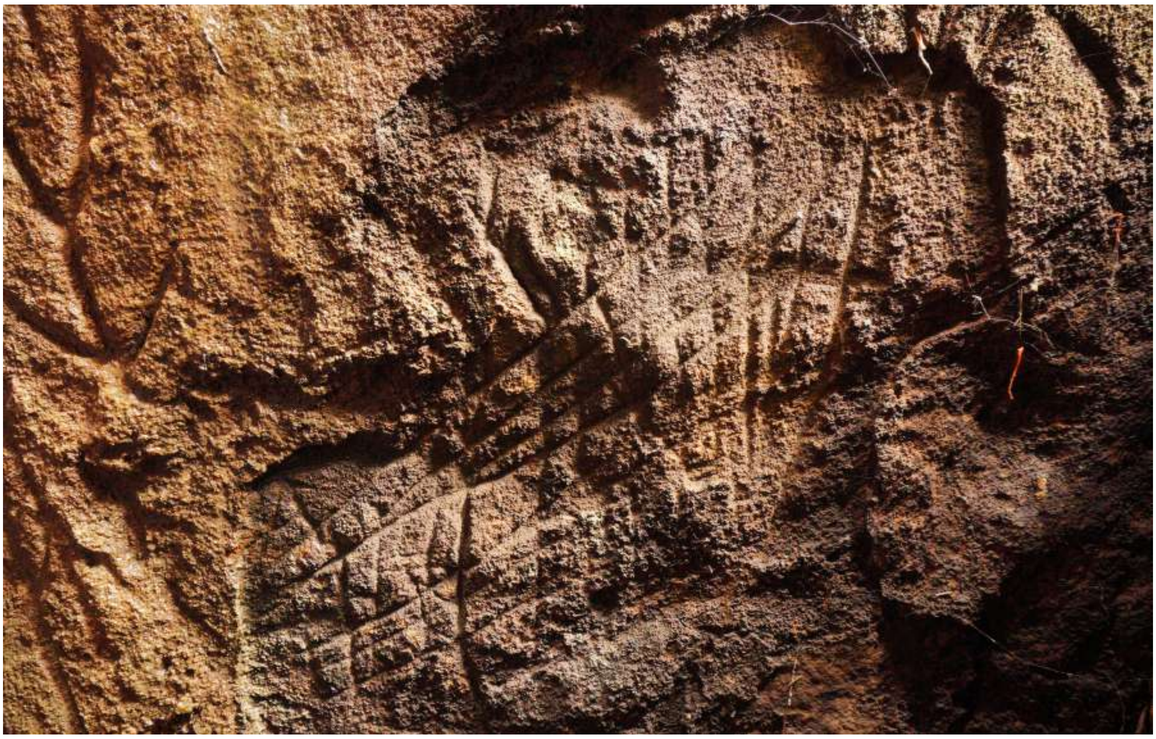


Fig. 4.12.10a Geometric petroglyphs

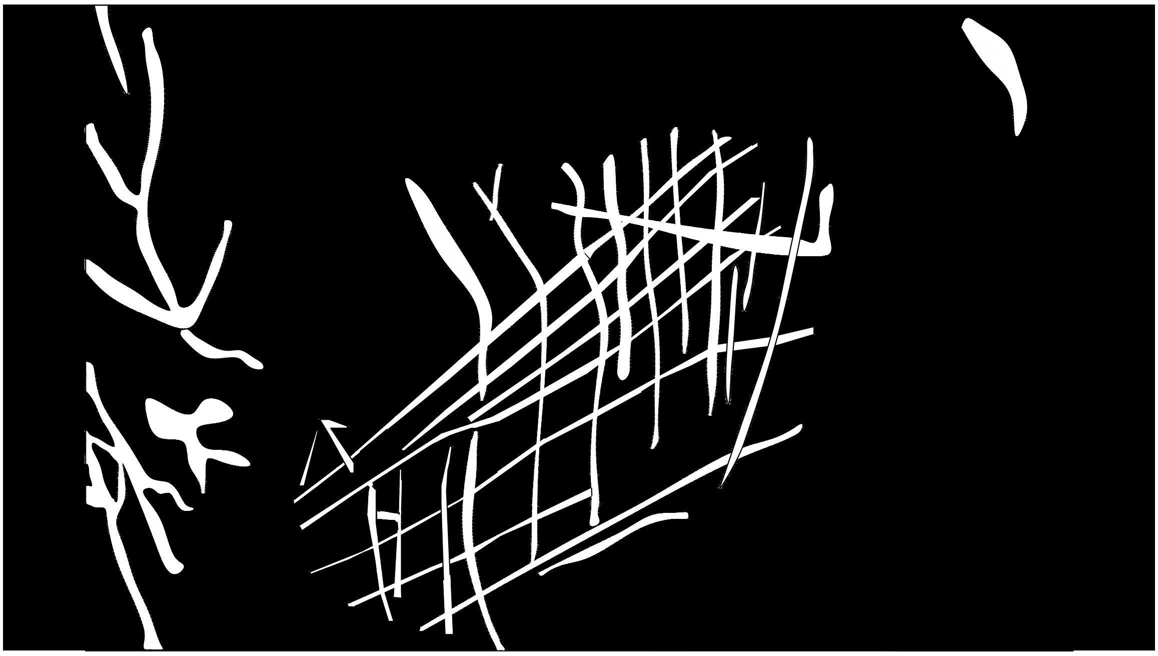


Fig. 4.12.10b Geometric petroglyphs

In this panel, a few modern Tamil words are overwritten. Below them, there are a few graffiti-like lines and a few lines carved deeply. This narrow cave is a bat shelter, with several hundred bats living here. Local people come here to hunt bats. Inside the cave, there are few carvings, mostly geometrical patterns carved by ancient people. The modern bat hunters imitate the old carvings and they also create a few graffiti

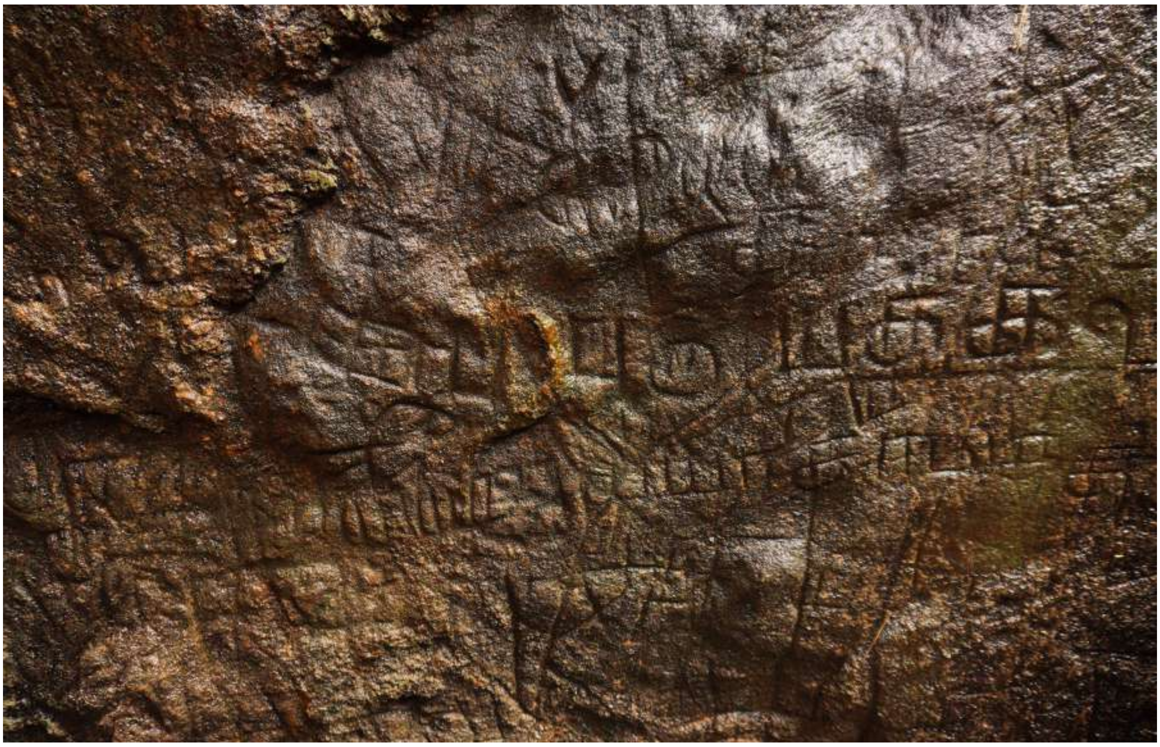


Fig. 4.12.11a Geometric and Tamil petroglyphs

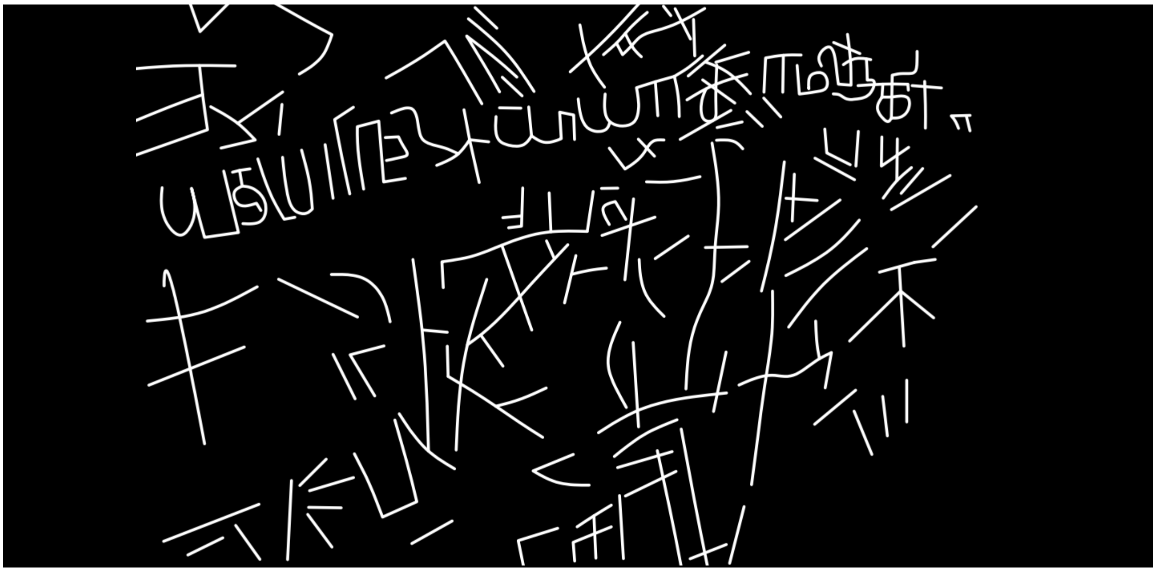


Fig. 4.12.11b Geometric and Tamil petroglyphs

and letters in the cave. Images are carved one above the other, showing that they were carved at different periods of time by different people (Figs. 4.12.11a-4.12.11b).

Locality II

Locality II with more than sixty drawings is found on the exposed rocky surface. Many of these depict geometric shapes with some repeated figures. Notably, there are depictions of trident-like figures, arrowhead-like shapes, square grids with cross lines, rectangular grids with cross lines, triangular grids with cross lines, comb-like designs,

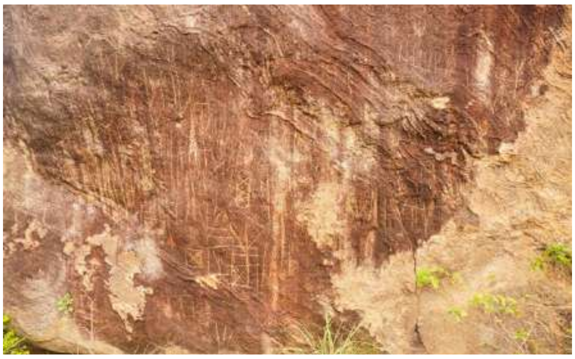


Fig. 4.12.12a Geometric petroglyphs

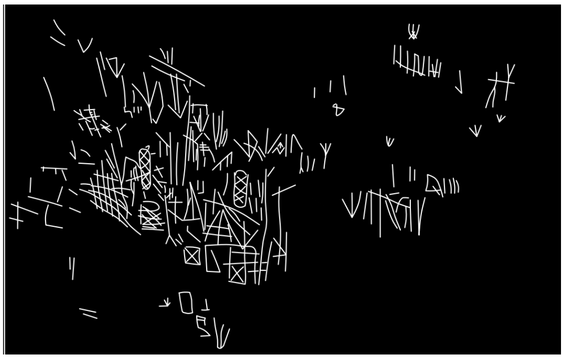
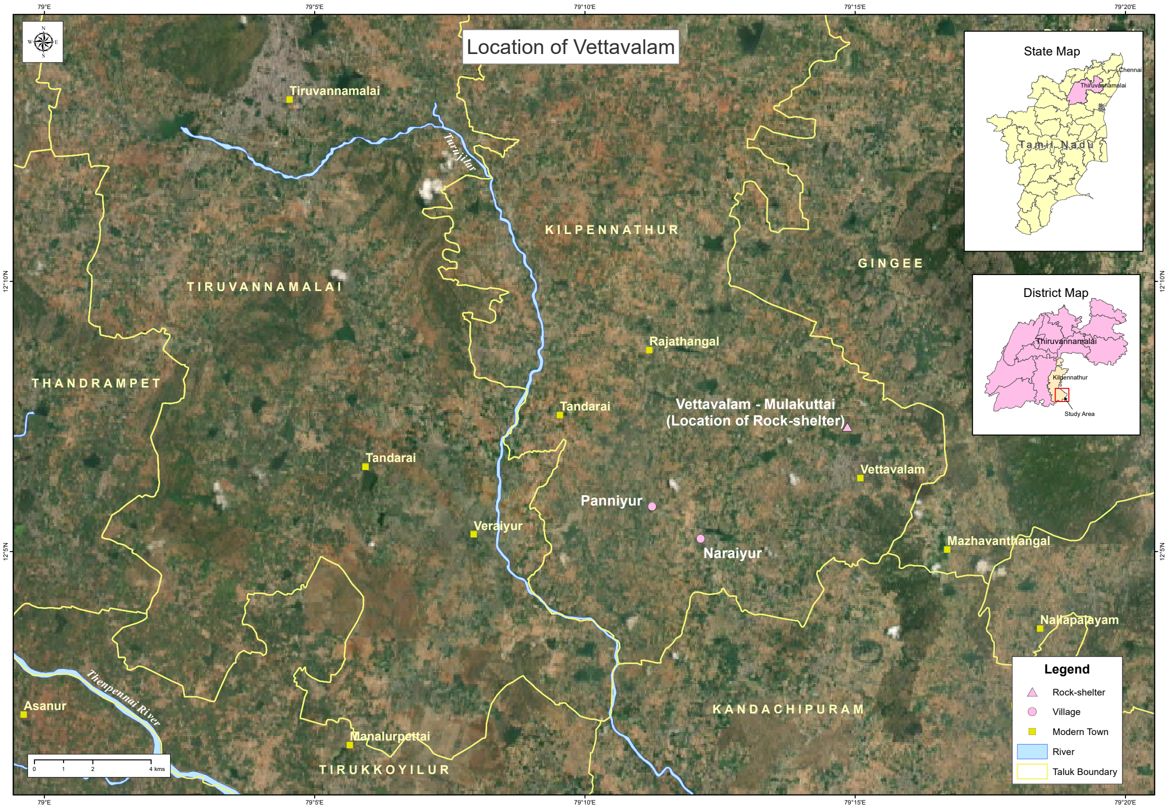


Fig. 4.12.12b Geometrical petroglyphs

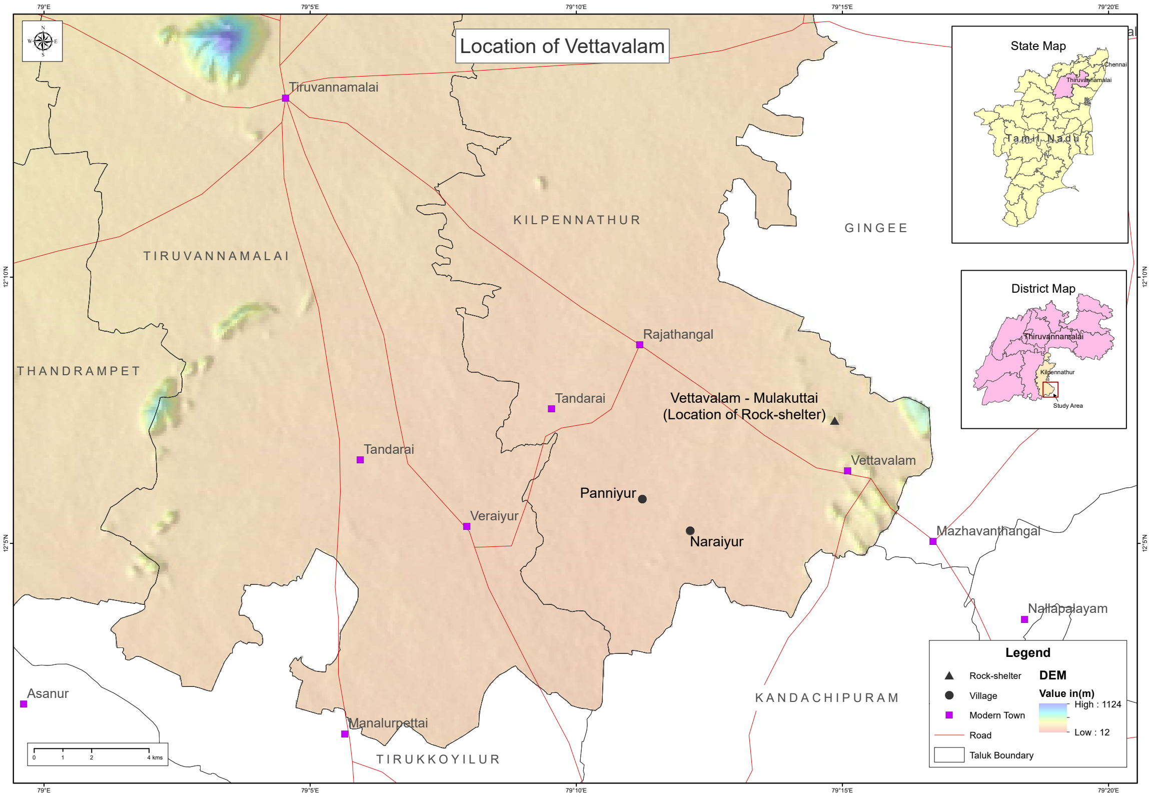
long lines, horizontal lines and compound forms. These drawings may represent hunting or religious significance. Additionally, they could serve as symbols conveying information along the route. These carvings are neatly and solidly executed, possibly with iron chisels (Figs. 4.12.12a-4.12.12b).

4.13 Vettavalam

Vettavalam (12.11152 N; 79.24431 E) is a major village located 25 km from Tiruvannamalai. The rock shelter locally called *mulakuttai*, it is a part of *Pappankottai*, which lies to the north of Vettavalam (Map 4.13.1-4.13.2).


Location of Vettavalam
79°E
79°5'E
79°10'E
79°15'E
79°20'E
12°10'N
12°5'N
N
W
E
S
Tiruvannamalai
Turujilar
KILPENNATHUR
GINGEE
TIRUVANNAMALAI
THANDRAMPET
Rajathangal
Tandarai
Vettavalam - Mulakuttai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Tandarai
Vettavalam
Panniyur
Veraiyur
Naraiyur
Mazhavanthangal
Nallapalayam
Thenpennai River
Asanur
KANDACHIPURAM
Manalurpettai
TIRUKKOYILUR
0
1
2
4 kms
State Map
Chennai
Thiruvannamalai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Thiruvannamalai
Kilpennathur
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
River
Taluk Boundary

Map 4.13.1 Location of the rock-shelter


Location of Vettavalam
Tiruvannamalai
TIRUVANNAMALAI
KILPENNATHUR
GINGEE
THANDRAMPET
Rajathangal
Tandarai
Tandarai
Vettavalam - Mulakuttai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Vettavalam
Panniyur
Naraiyur
Veraiyur
Mazhavanthangal
Nallapalayam
Asanur
Manalurpettai
TIRUKKOYILUR
KANDACHIPURAM
State Map
Chennai
Thiruvannamalai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Thiruvannamalai
Kilpennathur
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1124
Low : 12
79°E
79°5'E
79°10'E
79°15'E
79°20'E
12°10'N
12°5'N
0
1
2
4 kms

Map 4.13.2 Location of the rock-shelter

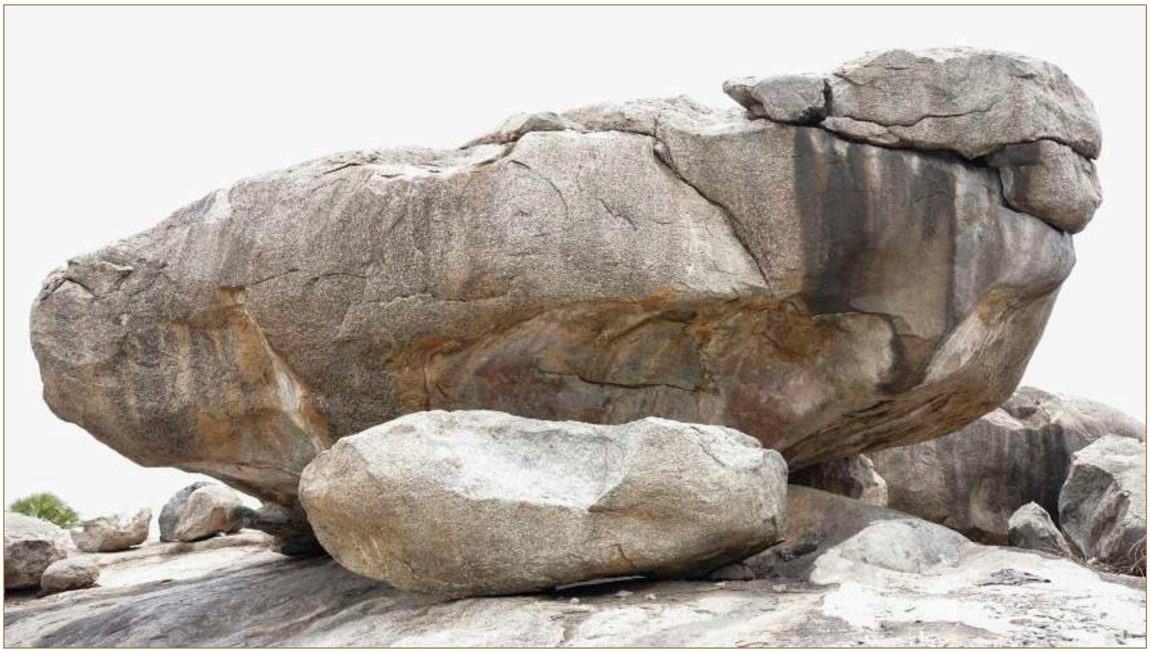


Fig. 4.13.1 General view of the rock-shelter

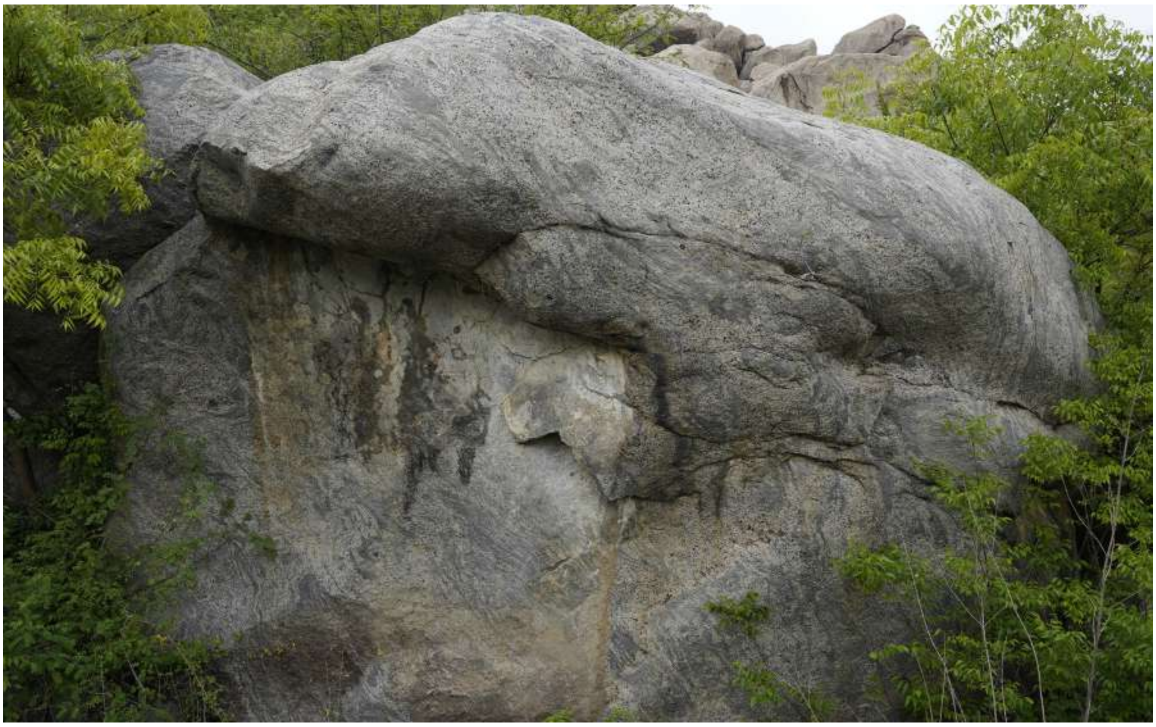


Fig. 4.13.2 General view of the rock-shelter

The west-facing rock shelter is located on the western side of the foothill called Anukkanmalai (Fig. 4.13.1-4.13.2). A deer with antlers is depicted facing a dog, probably a hunting dog. There are U-shaped parallel lines depicted above the deer and dots and found at the foot of the deer in a circular form.

Description

At Vettavalam, a huge rock boulder having paintings in the lower part is noticed. This panel has paintings dominantly in red and a few of them are in white. Linear lines and body-filled drawings are noticed. There are figures with peripheral dotted lines. Human figures riding over an animal, animal figures, geometric and non-geometric have also been noticed. This panel doesn't give any complete scene, but rather presents figures in random. Most of the paintings are faded. Three abstract symbols, three human figures and eight animal figures are noticed.

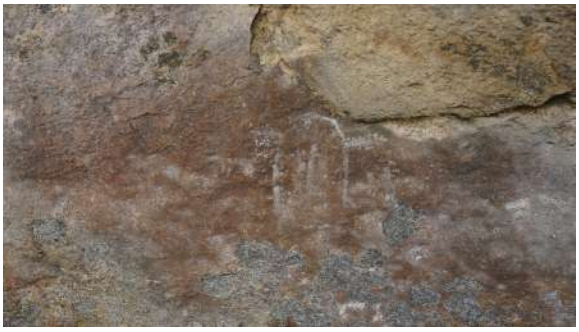


Fig. 4.13.3a Human and animals

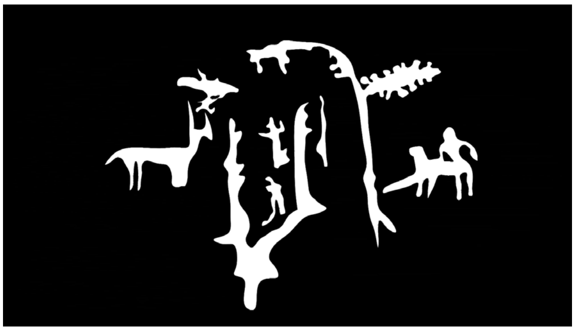


Fig. 4.13.3b Human and animals

The rock shelter has paintings of a trident symbol and a wavy symbol and on the left side of the symbol, a animal figure is drawn, right to these two human figures riding an animal. On top of this symbol, a multi-legged animal is painted (Fig. 4.13.3a-4.13.3b).

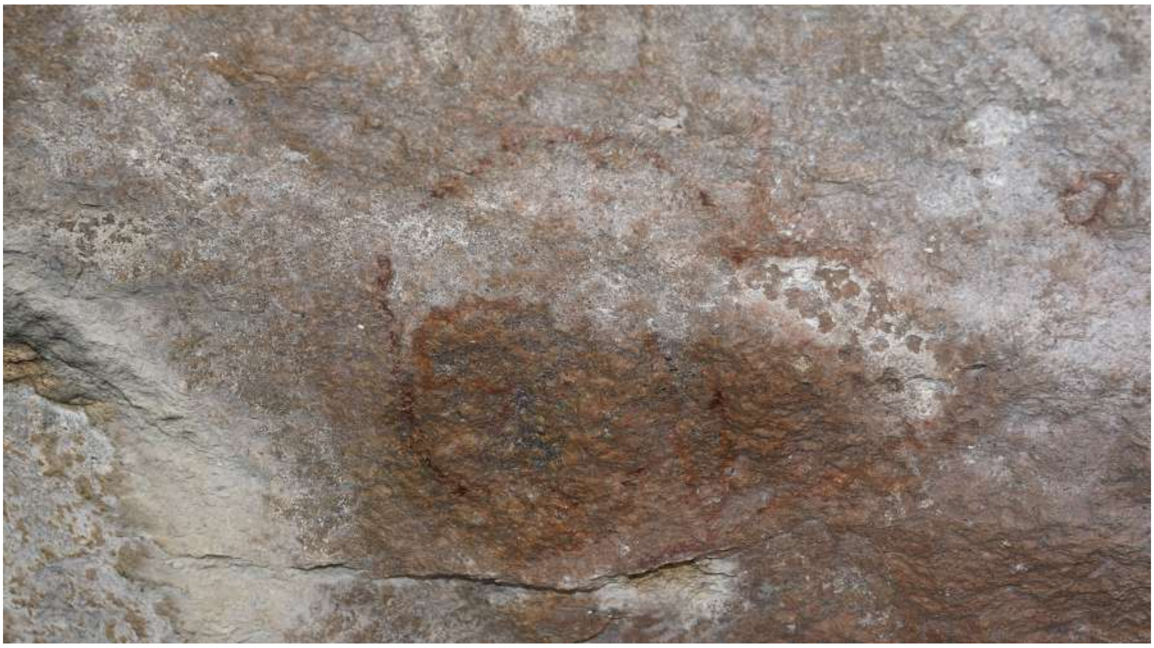


Fig. 4.13.4a Animal

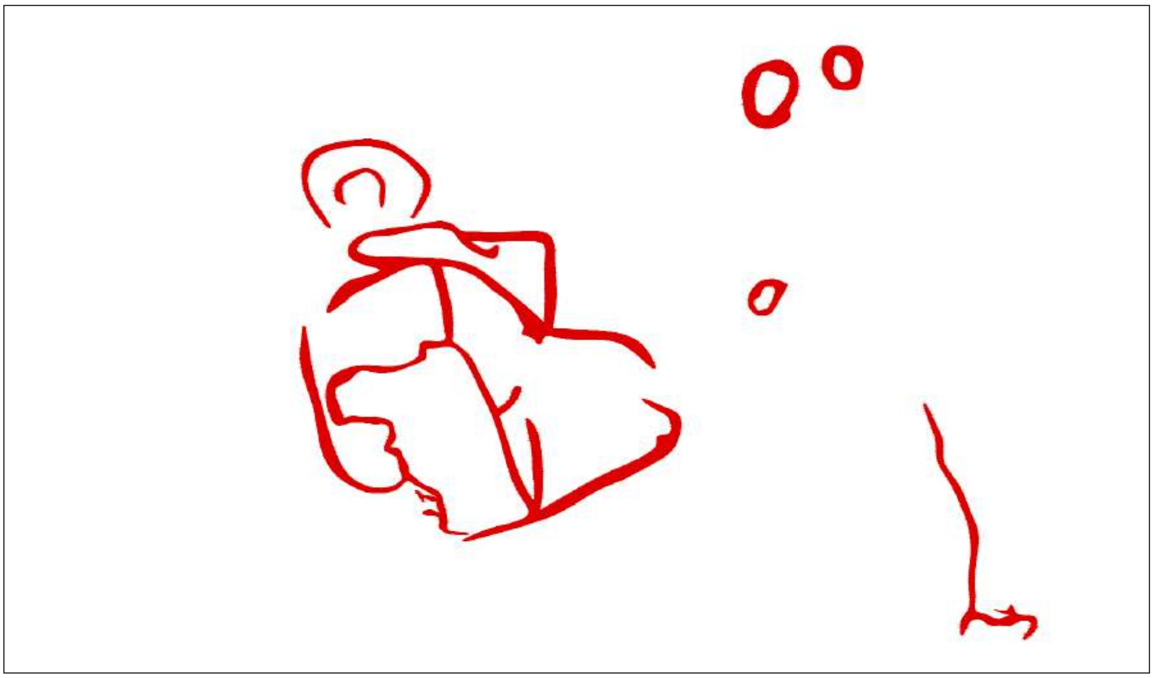


Fig. 4.13.4b Animal

The cluster of painting shows an animal figure with a big curvy body drawn with five to six lines above the body and two to three lines below, which may be considered as legs and scales of a porcupine (Fig. 4.13.4a-4.13.4b).

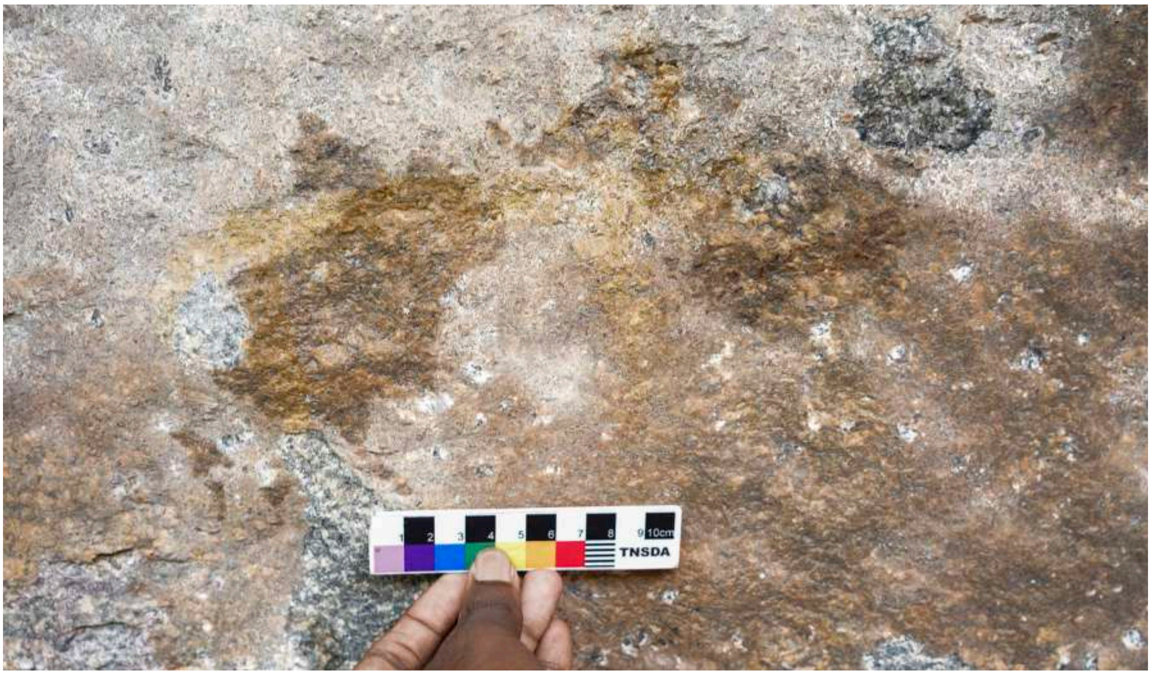


Fig. 4.13.5a Two circles

Another cluster has two small circular symbols with white pigment filled inside the circle. Red ochre outline is seen on the white colour, currently it is in faded condition (Fig. 4.13.5a).

The cluster having a human figure without stretched arms riding over an animal is drawn in the middle part with white pigment. Above these lines red paintings are noticed. Another animal drawn with a tail in a linear pattern is observed on the opposite of the rider, but all are faded and unidentified. The panel shows that the two animal

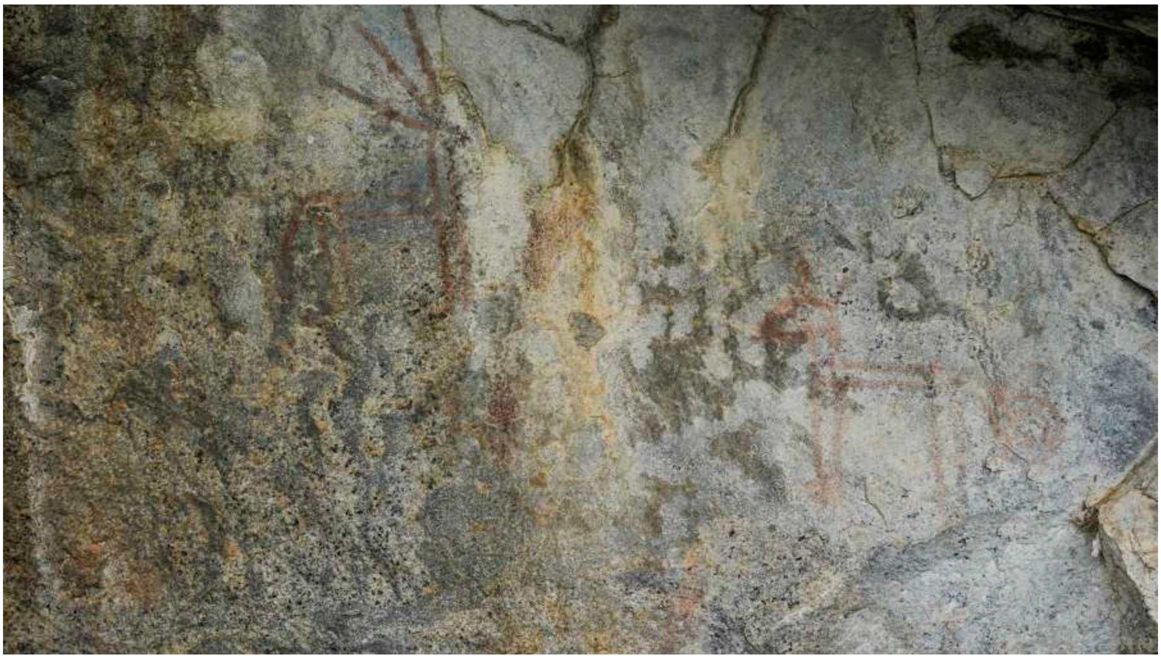


Fig. 4.13.6a Human and animal figurine

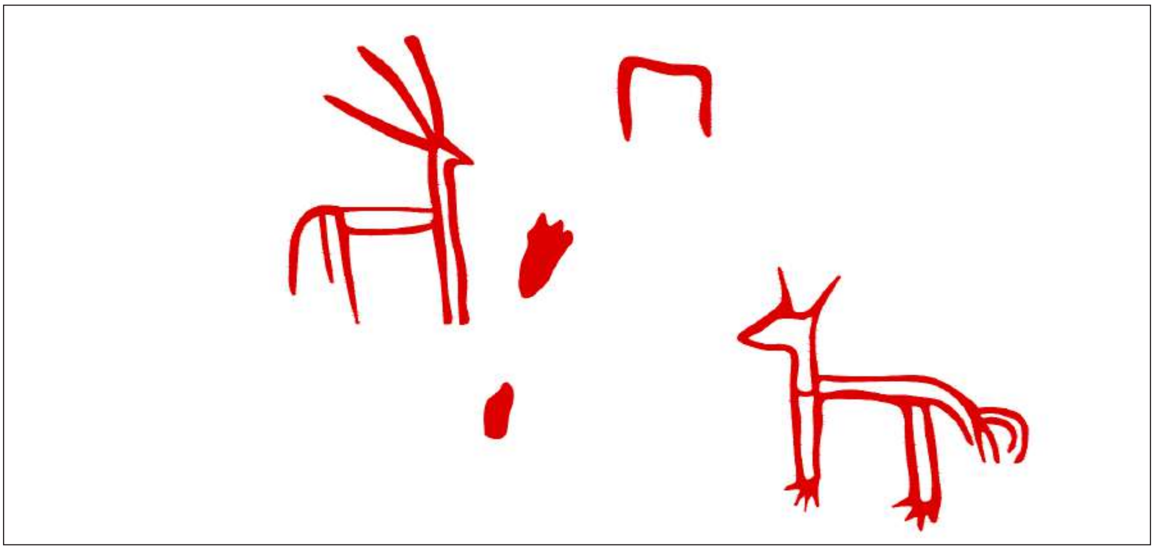


Fig. 4.13.6b Human and animal figurine

figures are drawn facing each other, probably a fighting scene between animals. On the left is a deer-like animal and on the right, it may be a horse. Above these two, one more animal figure is noticed in a faded condition (Fig. 4.13.6a-4.13.6b).

Fig. 4.13.7a Hunter raiding

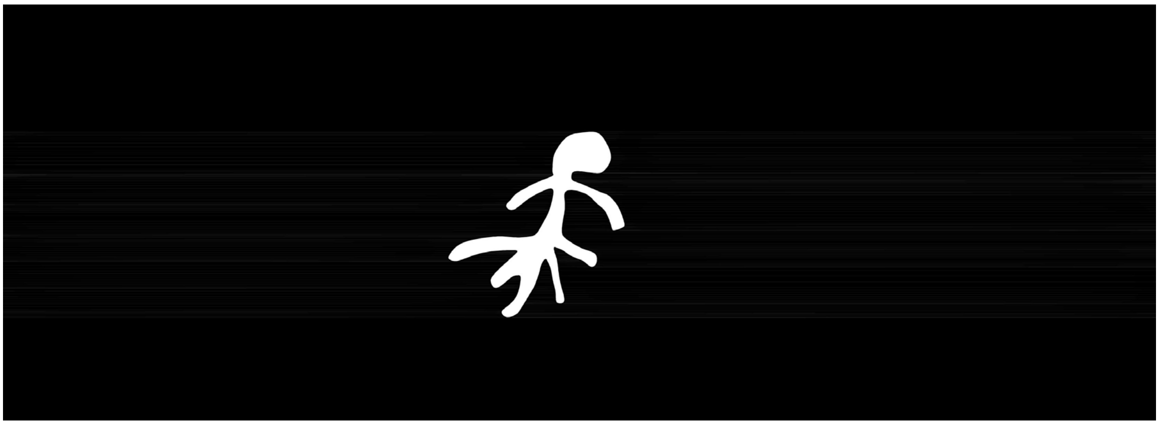


Fig. 4.13.7b Hunter raiding

A hunter raiding scene depicted in white pigment (Fig. 4.13.7a-4.13.7b). The hunter is sitting on an animal and the animal is shown on the move. A deer with long horns facing east is depicted in red (Fig. 4.13.8a-4.13.7b).

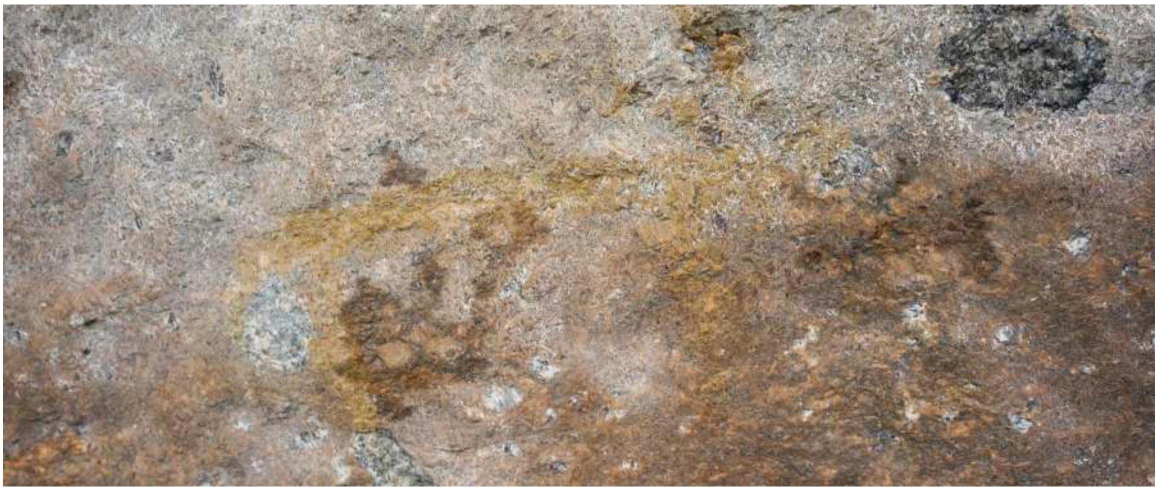


Fig. 4.13.8a Deer

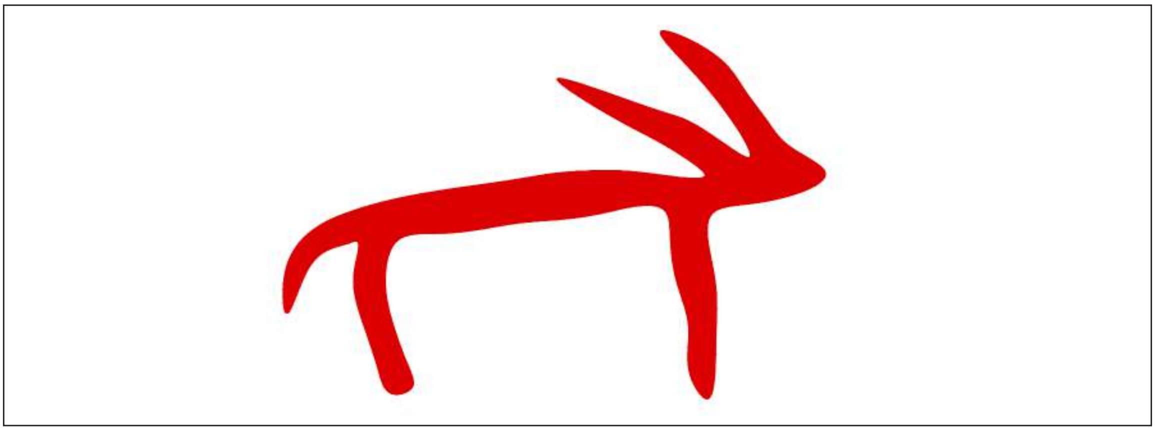
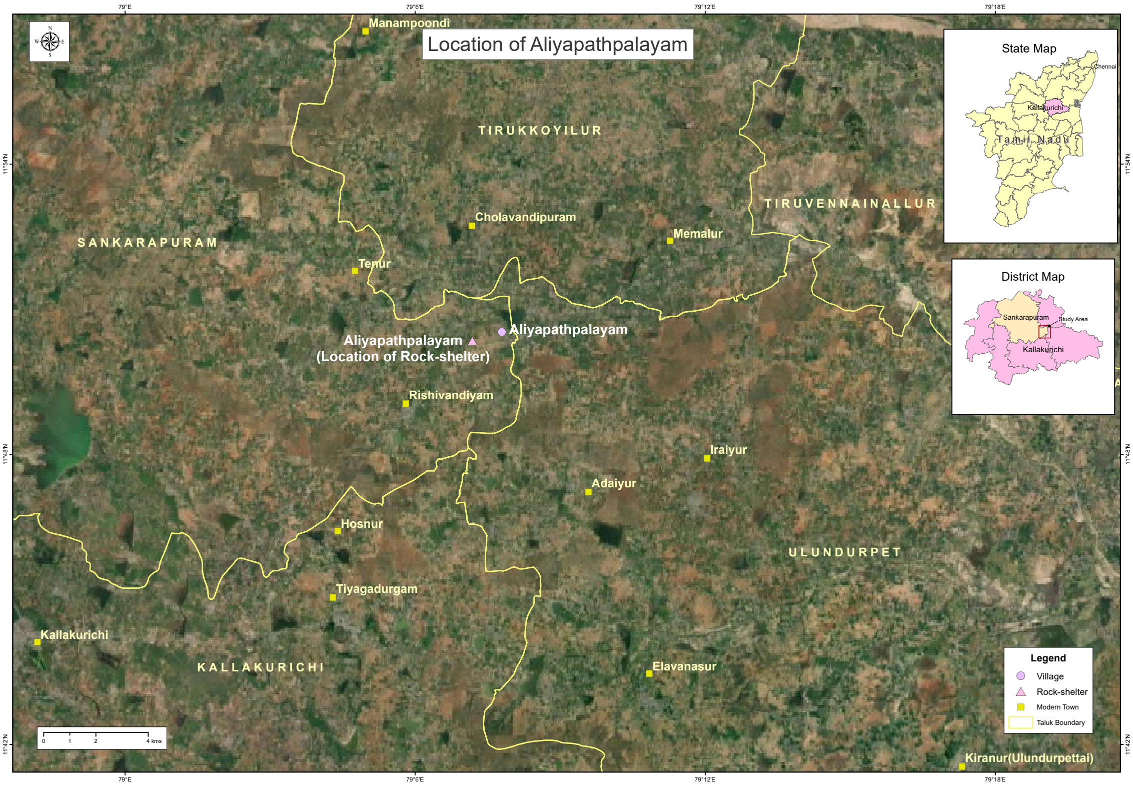


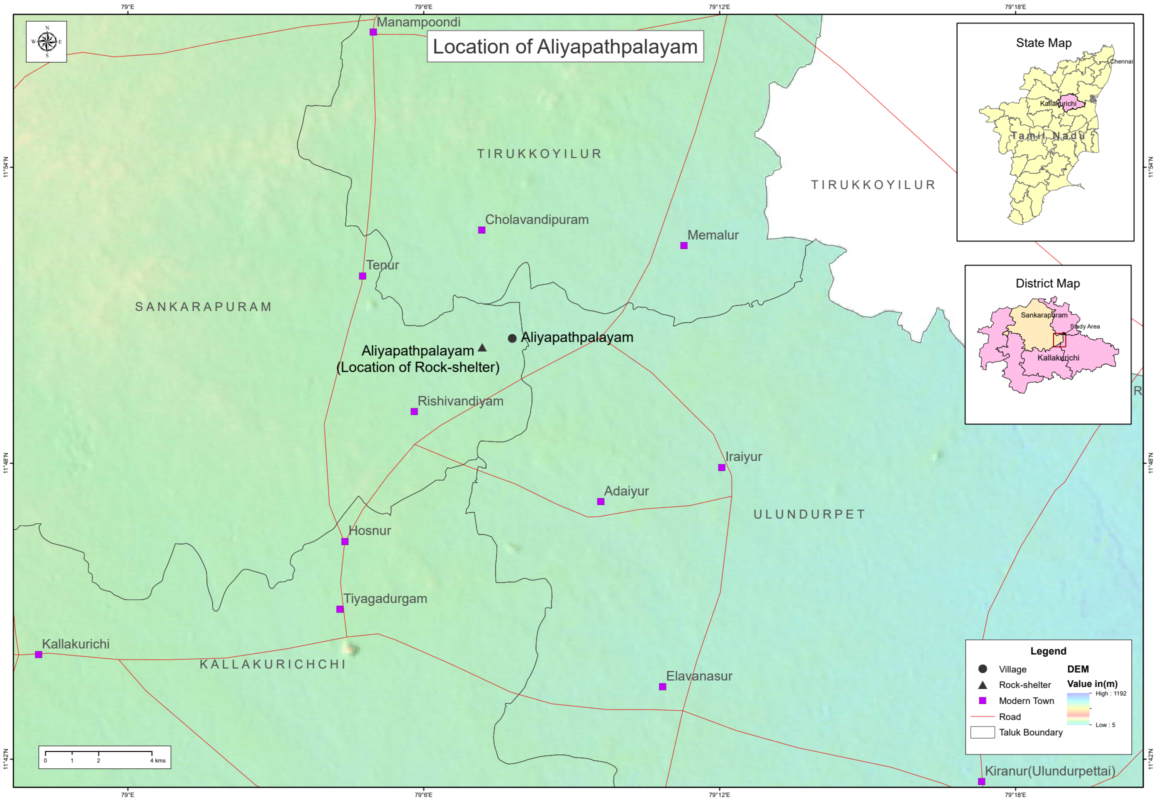
Fig. 4.13.8b Deer

4.14 Aliyabadpalayam

Aliyabadpalayam (Aliyapathpalayam) (11.83914 E; 79.11973 E) lies 20 km to the south of Tirukkovilur towards Rishivanthiyam. The village lies 0.5 km away from the main road (Map 4.14.1 – 4.14.2). The rock shelter lies to the north of the village close to the Viranarkoil (Fig. 4.14.1). The entire area is known as *Kallangkuttu* (corrupt form of *Kalkundru*). The east facing shelter is located 100 m north of Viranarkoil has depictions of fish and some unidentified figures on the other side of the shelter. Megalithic cairn circles with a habitation mound are noticed about 6.1 km east of the village near Pasar.


Location of Aliyapathpalayam
TIRUKKOYILUR
SANKARAPURAM
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
ULUNDURPET
KALLAKURICHI
Manampoondi
Cholavandipuram
Memalur
Tenur
Aliyapathpalayam
Aliyapathpalayam
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Rishivandiyam
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Hosnur
Tiyagadurgam
Kallakurichi
Elavanasur
Kiranur(Ulundurpettai)
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary

Map 4.14.1 Location of the rock-shelter


Location of Aliyapathpalayam
TIRUKKOYILUR
TIRUKKOYILUR
SANKARAPURAM
ULUNDURPET
KALLAKURICHCHI
Manampoondi
Cholavandipuram
Memalur
Tenur
Aliyapathpalayam
Aliyapathpalayam
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Rishivandiyam
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Hosnur
Tiyagadurgam
Kallakurichi
Elavanasur
Kiranur(Ulundurpettai)
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1192
Low : 5

Map 4.14.2 Location of the rock-shelter

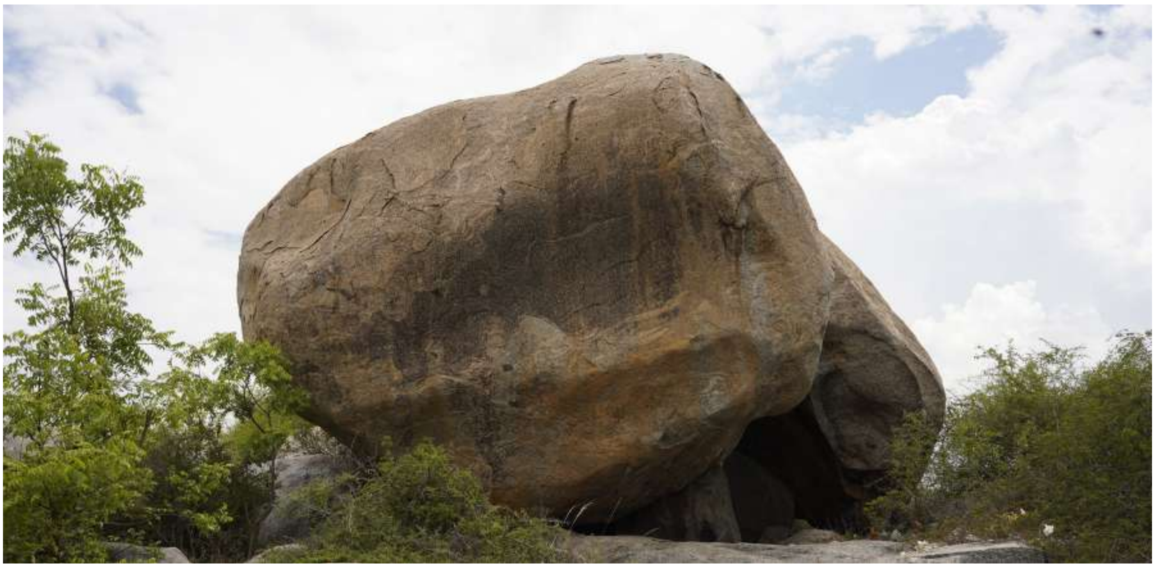


Fig. 4.14.1 General view of the rock-shelter

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 9 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 7 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 5 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 6 m. The total area of the painted surface is about 0.50x1.35 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

At Aliyabadpalayam paintings of humans, animals and some abstract symbols are present in red ochre. Paintings are not found in clusters or group, all of them are faded. Therefore, it doesn't represent a complete scene, but some natural depictions such as floral designs, animals and humans are scattered around, perhaps representing an agro-pastoral community.

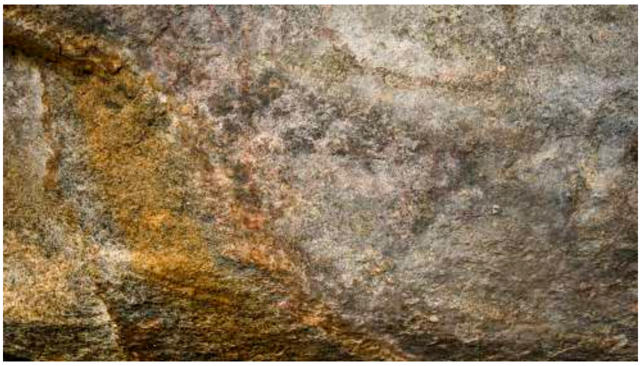


Fig. 4.14.2a Animal and human

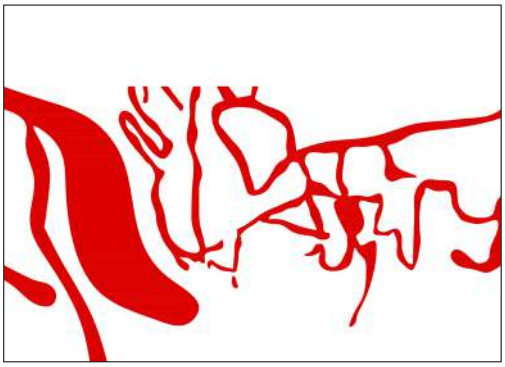


Fig. 4.14.2b Animal and human

Panel Description

A cluster shows that the animal figure is painted in the centre and to its left is a human figure with stretched hands and long. Many criss-cross lines are seen (Fig. 4.14.2a-4.14.2b).

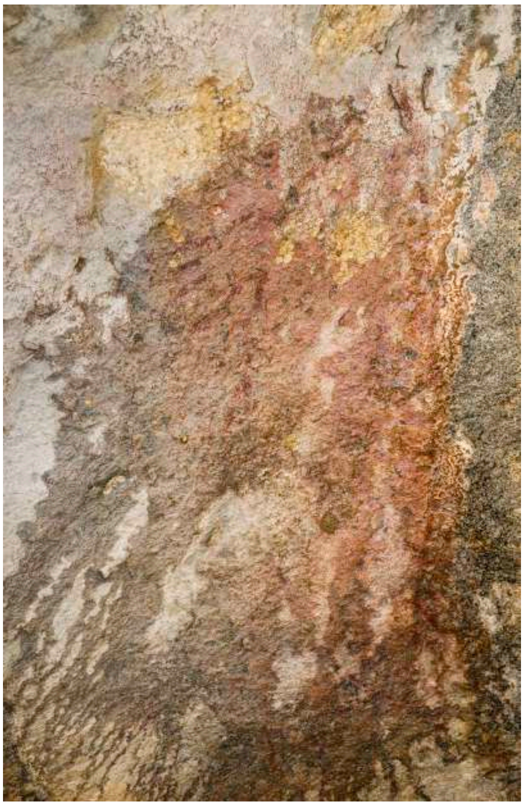


Fig. 4.14.3a Human and palm like sign

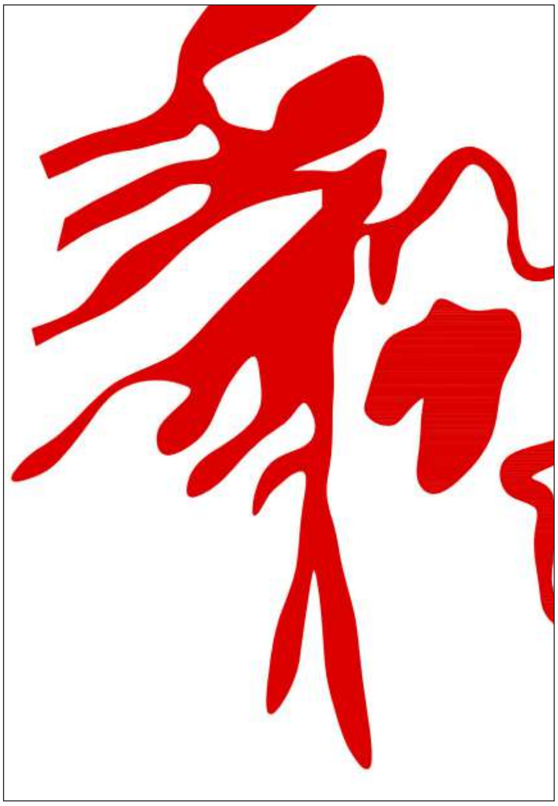


Fig. 4.14.3b Human and palm like sign

This is red colour pictographs are barely discernible due to encrustations of algae and lichens. Highly smudged standing human figure with discernible legs, body, head and smudged hands. Three fingers-like feature are discernible made with equal intervals and thickness made to the left of a standing human figure's head level (Fig. 4.14.3a-4.14.3b).

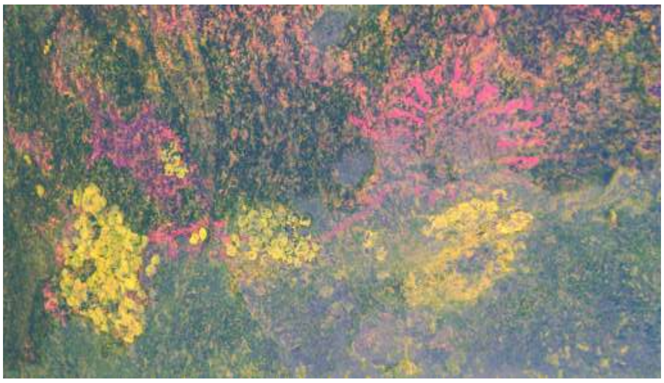


Fig. 4.14.4a Sun/Labyrinth

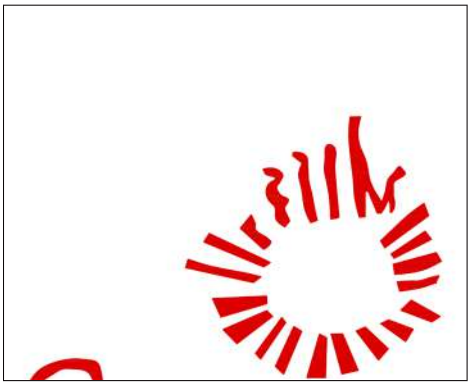


Fig. 4.14.4b Sun/Labyrinth

Next cluster shows painted concentric lines in an irregular circular shape which resembles a sun and below this, a human figure is noticed and rest are unidentifiable. These paintings made of red ochre consist of 21 individual strokes of line in varied shapes and sizes drawn in a circular form, suggesting the image of a sun/source of light or a labyrinth design or symbol (Fig. 4.14.4a-4.14.4b).

The panel shows that the animal figure and some vertical lines on the boulder and all are in faded condition. It might be cattle and the leg portion is partly visible (Fig. 4.14.5a-4.14.5b).

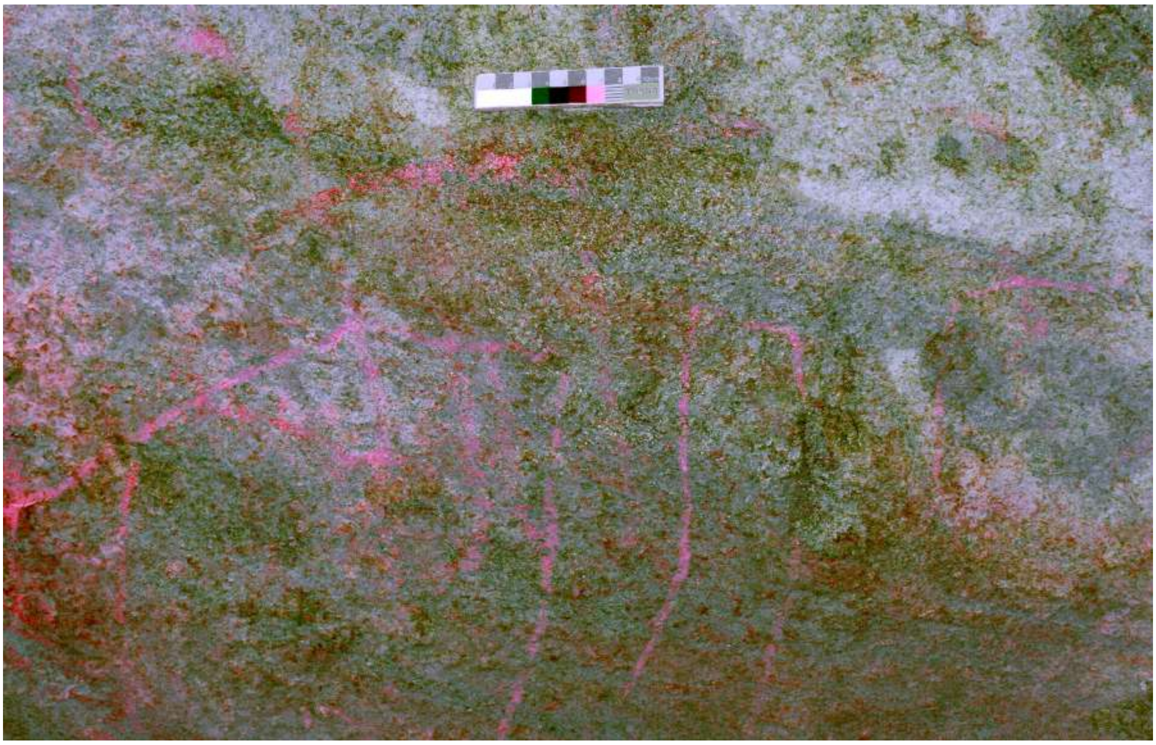


Fig. 4.14.5a *Animal and vertical lines*

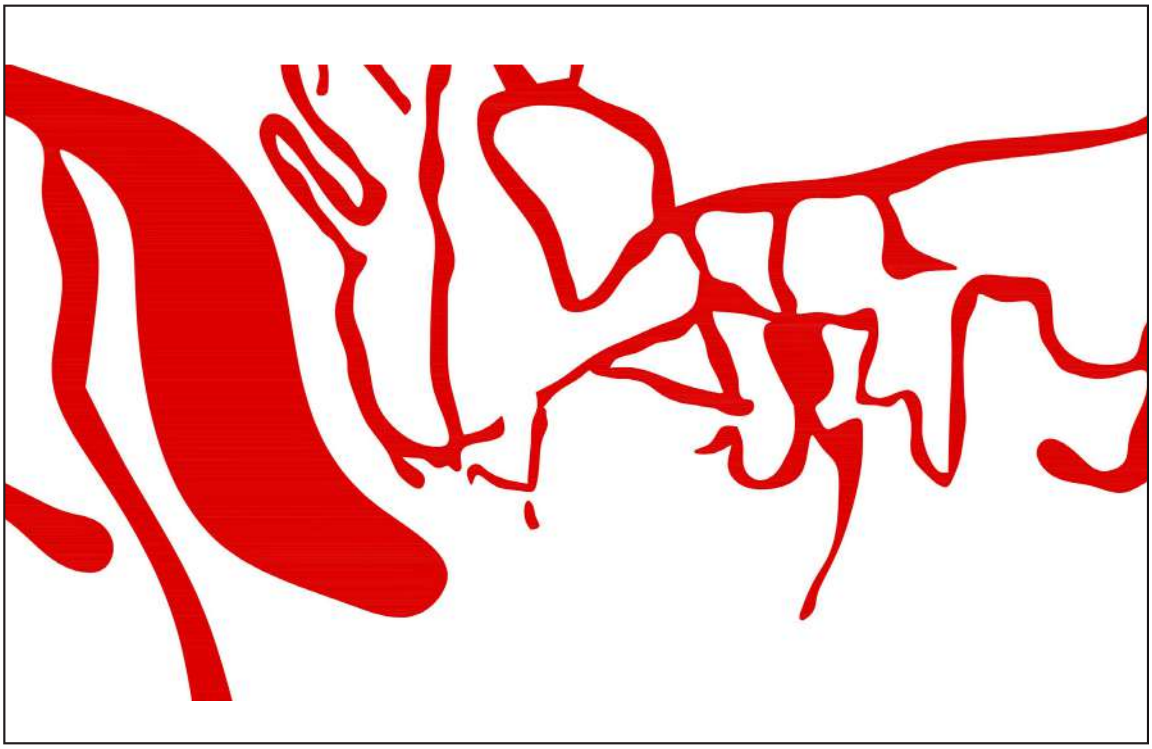


Fig. 4.14.5b *Animal and vertical lines*

Two long vertical lines have been identified that resembles the painting continuation of previous one. Other than this many faded lines are seen here and there (Fig. 4.14.6a-4.14.6b).

The paintings here are made of red ochre in a simple thin line and the majority of them are completely depleted and only through image enhancement this minimum result is obtained. Starting from the top, there are two parallel lines drawn at a gap of approx. 6 cm with a slight curve at the end is evident. Beneath it, there is another line drawing of an abstract nature.

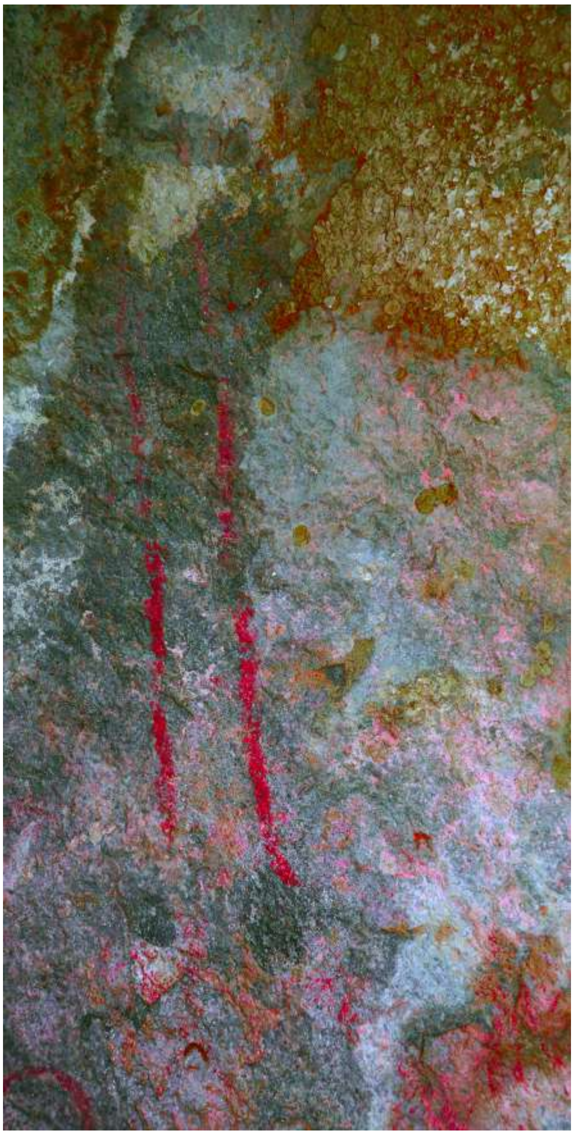


Fig. 4.14.6a Two vertical lines

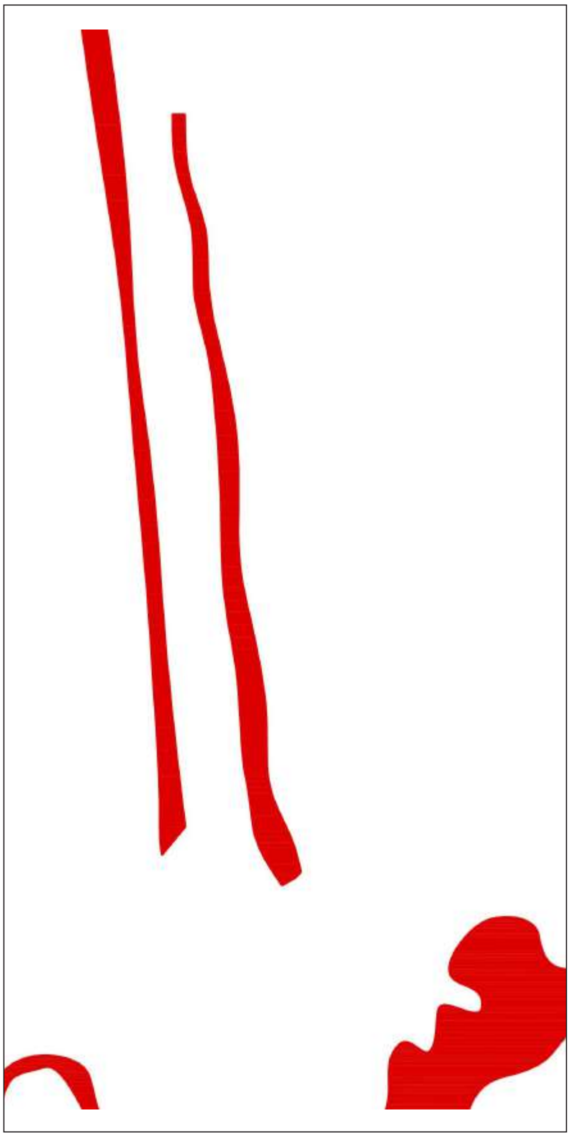


Fig. 4.14.6b Two vertical lines

Other than these two, after image enhancement, several linear and non-linear lines are found scattered in a very abstract and unfinished manner with gaps in-between due to complete depletion (Fig. 4.14.7a-4.14.7b).

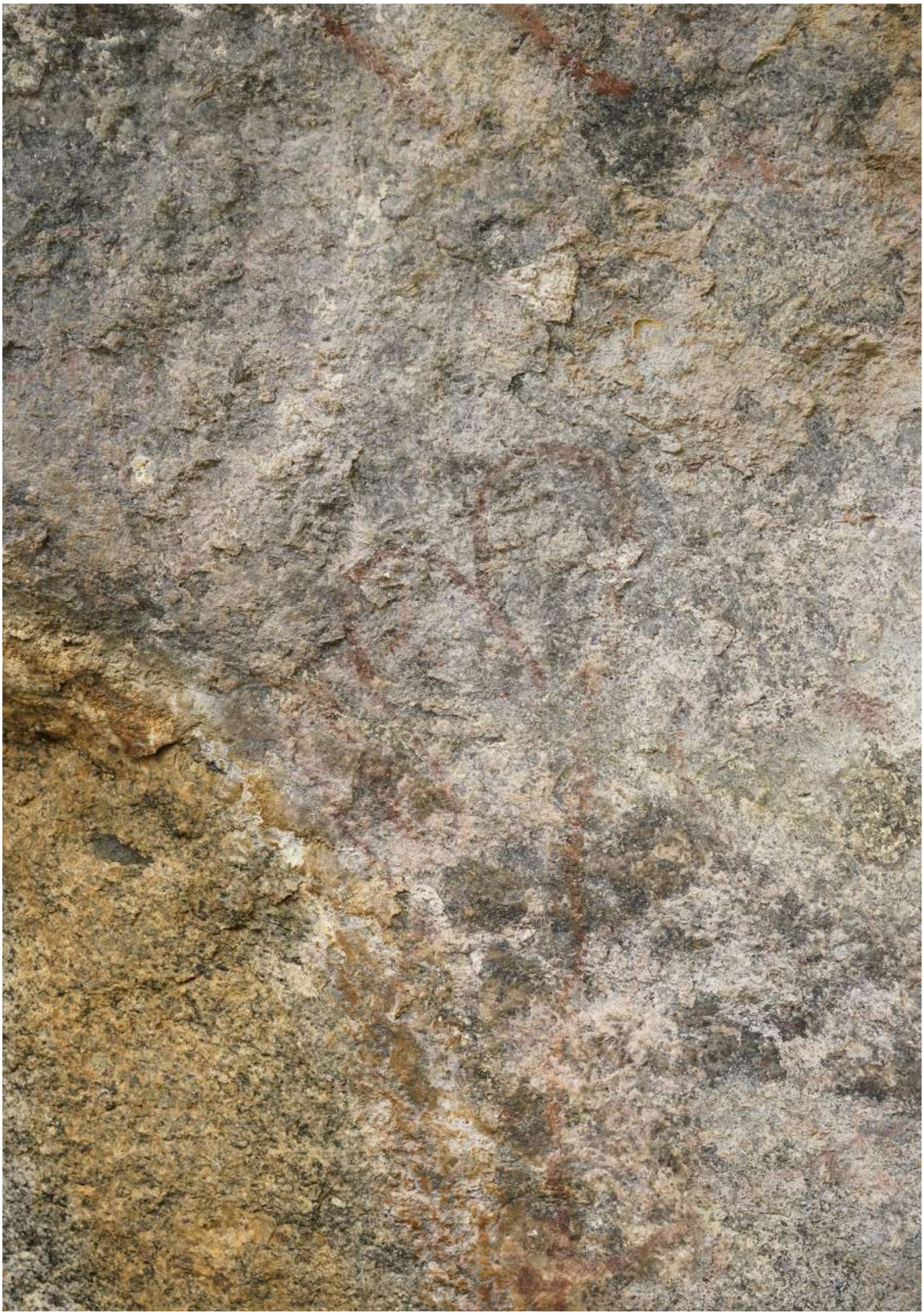


Fig. 4.14.7a Faded and abstract figures

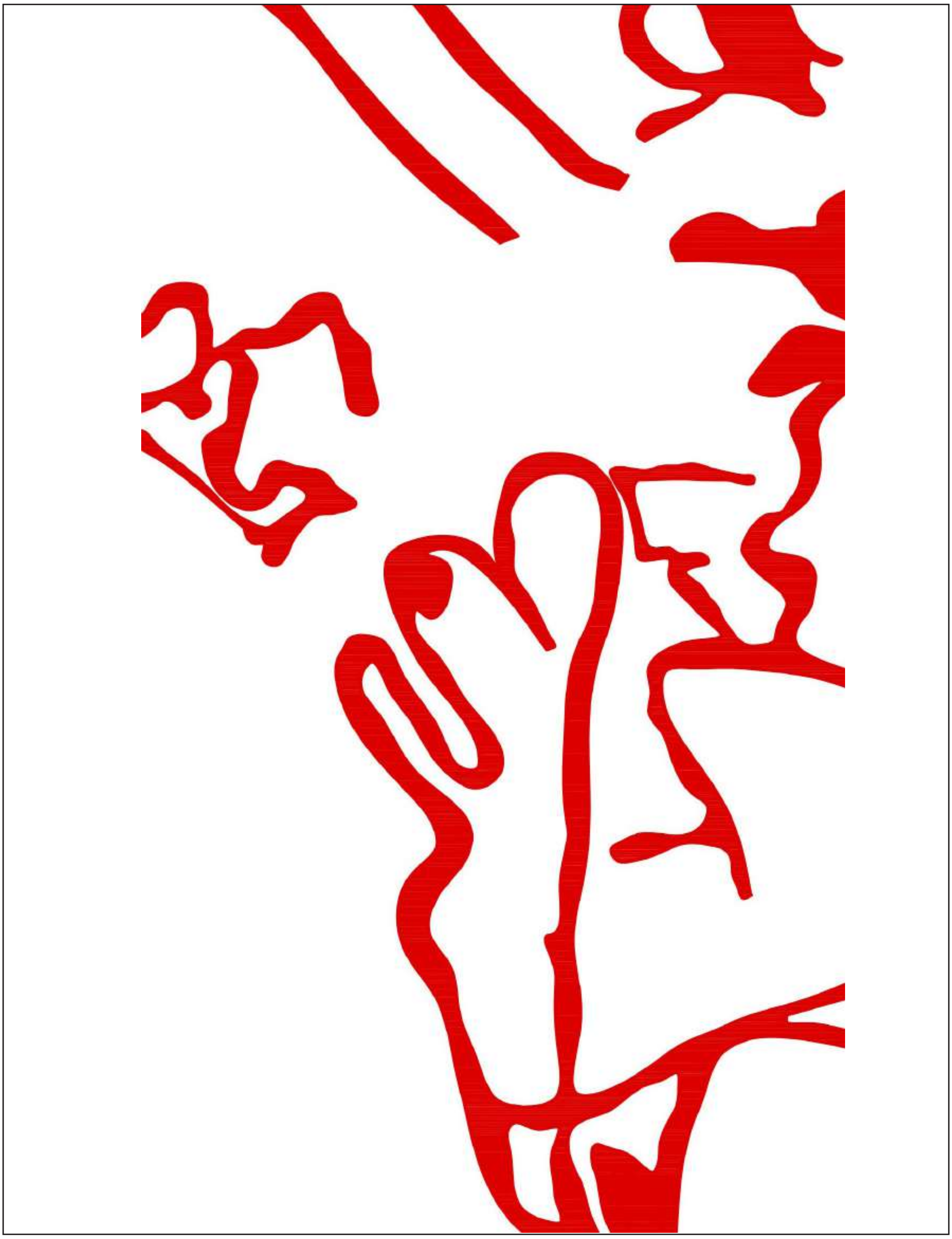


Fig. 4.14.7b *Faded and abstract figures*

Thin-line based animal figure facing triangular hump drawn in the mid-portion of the animal. Further to the right of it, a human figure is shown with wide open legs, an extended right hand adjoined to a acute line pointing downwards and a short left hand (Fig. 4.14.8a-4.14.8b).

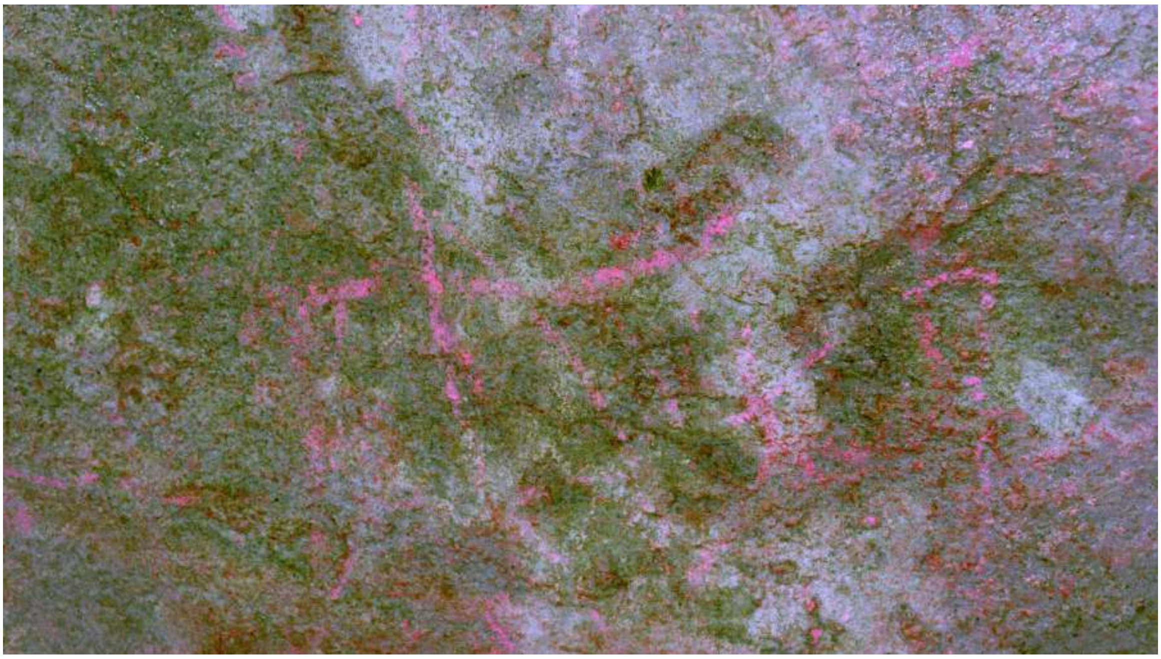


Fig. 4.14.8a *Animal and human figure*

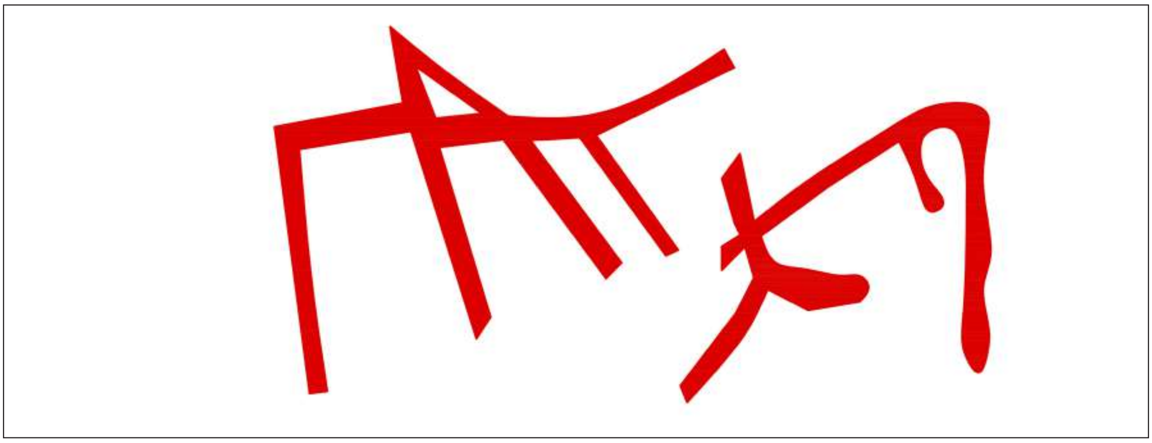
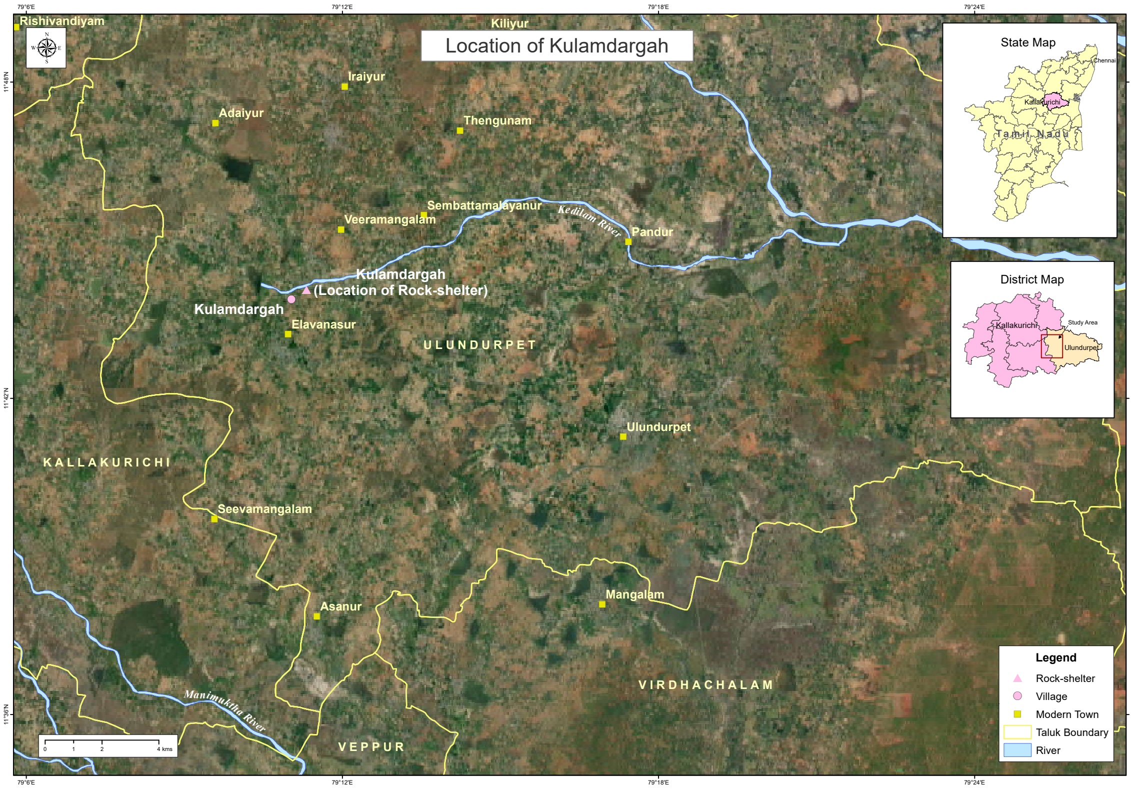


Fig. 4.14.8b *Animal and human figure*

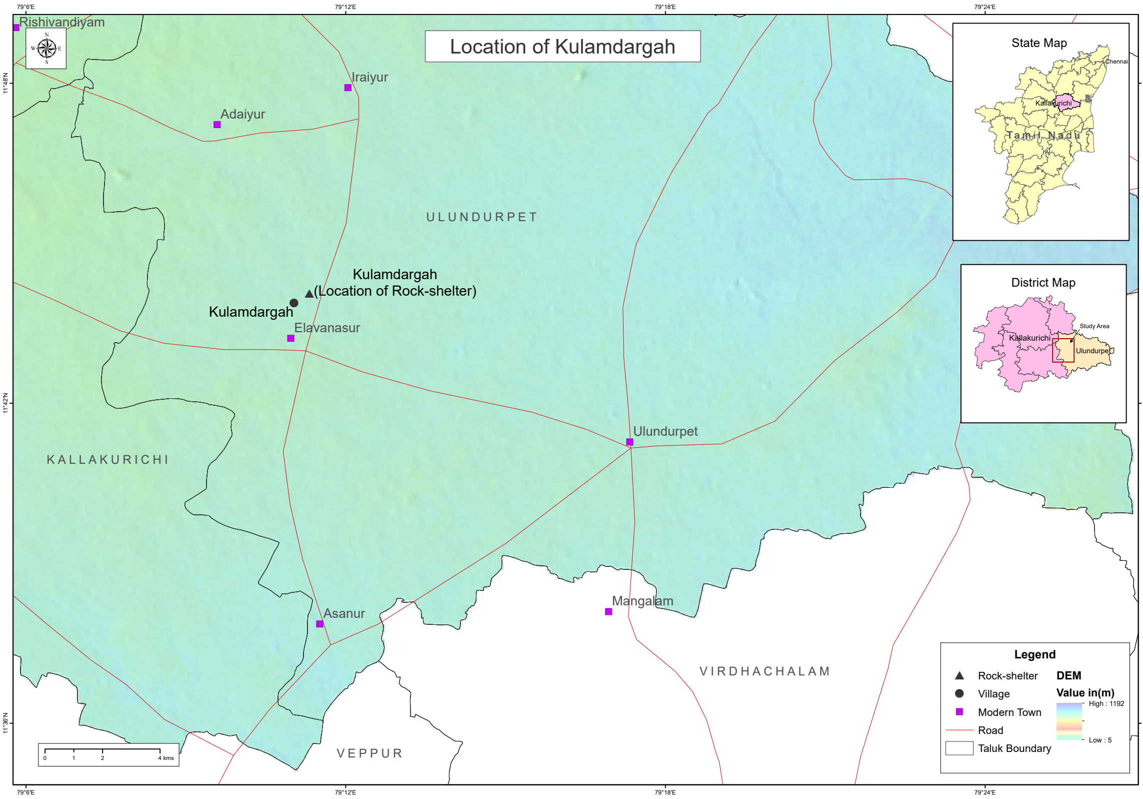
4.15 Kulamdargah

Kulamdargah (11.73425 N; 79.18861 E) lies to the northeast of Kallakurichchi in Ulundurpettai taluk of Kallakurichci district (Maps 4.15.1-4.15.2). One has to take a diversion at Ilavarasankottai on the Ulundurpettai-Salem National Highway at a distance of 9 km from Ulundurpettai. The village lies 2 km north of Ilavarasankottai. The rock art site lies 0.5 km further north of the village and to the east of the Darga (Figs. 4.15.1- 4.15.2).

The rock shelter has been used presently as a burial place for a Muslim that led to name the rock shelter as Kulamdargah. The native name of the rock shelter could not be recalled by the present villagers. The paintings are noticed on the inner surface of the boulders placed in a circular form leaving the central part of the shelter with a open surface in which the grave is noticed (Figs. 4.15.1-4.15.2).


Location of Kulamdargah
Rishivandiyam
Kiliyur
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Sembattamalayanur
Veeramangalam
Kedilam River
Pandur
Kulamdargah
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Kulamdargah
Elavanasur
ULUNDURPET
Ulundurpet
KALLAKURICHI
Seevamangalam
Asanur
Mangalam
VIRDHACHALAM
Manimuktha River
VEPPUR
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.15.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Kulamdargah
Rishivandiyam
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
ULUNDURPET
Kulamdargah
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Kulamdargah
Elavanasur
Ulundurpet
KALLAKURICHI
Asanur
Mangalam
VIRDHACHALAM
VEPPUR
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1192
Low : 5

Map 4.15.2 Location of the rock-shelter

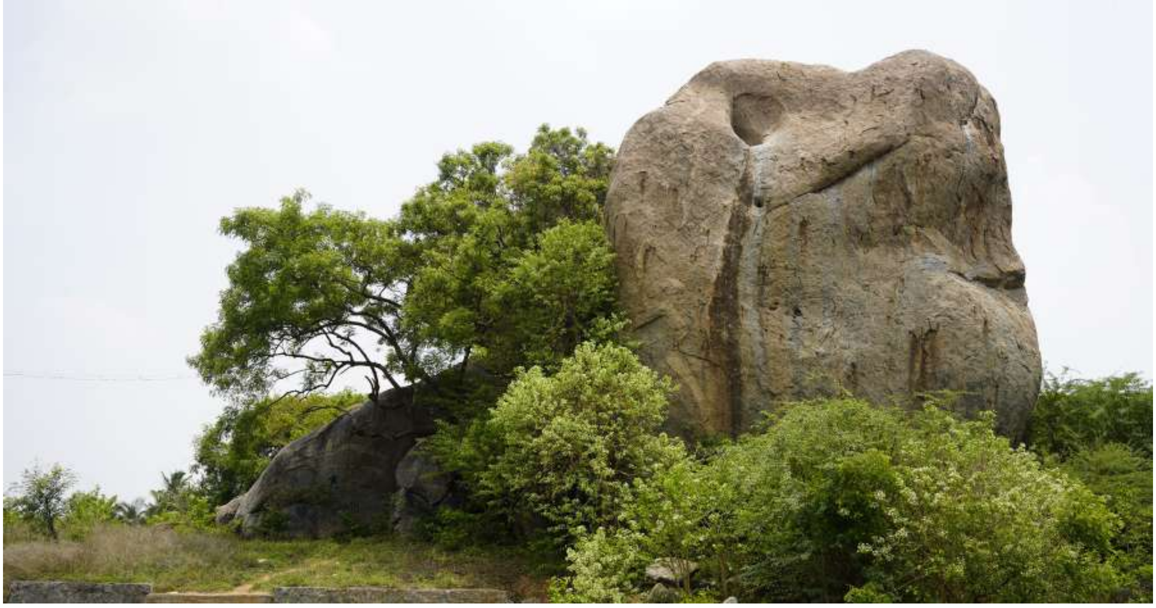


Fig. 4.15.1 General view of the rock shelter

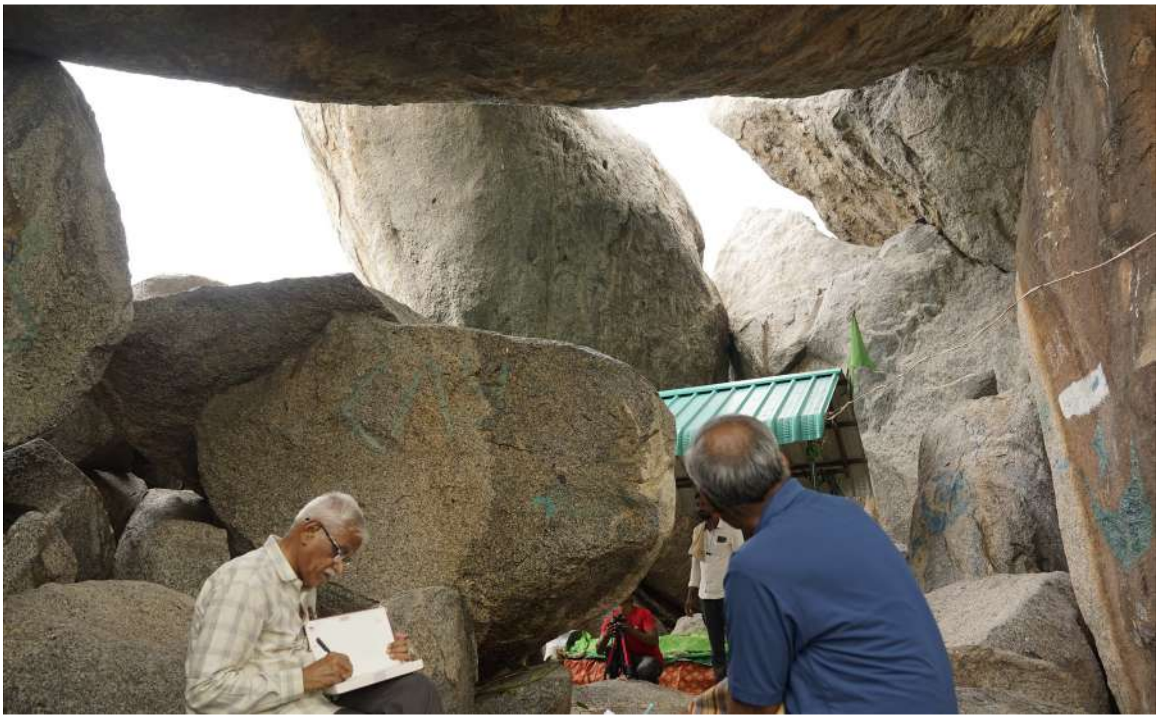


Fig. 4.15.2 General view of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 6.30 m, the total length of the rock shelter is about 7 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 6.30 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 6 m. The total area of the painting is about 1x1m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of human and geometric figures and cup-marks.

Panel Description

Starting from the top there are two abstract images in red probably indicating an entrance/doorway. It's shown as an arch with vertical cross and small circles on the divided spaces and spikes emerging from the top centre portion of the arch. Beneath it, there are four human pictographs and a linear wavy vertical line in red. Among the human figures, the first three from the right are drawn in in-filled fashion, of which the extreme right one is ithyphallic in nature, boxy head with outstretched hands.

To the left of it another human figure with wide open hands, inverted 'V' shaped legs and anchor-shaped head which can probably be a depiction of double head/ head-gear or any man-animal composite form. Further, the third human figure from the right has a pear-shaped head, shown facing left, evident with its leg posture and the left hand is shown extended and holding an object, the right hand is pointed upwards. In the space under the left arm of the previous image, the fourth human figure in stick fashion is shown in the same posture of the previous image but ithyphallic (Figs. 4.15.3a – 4.15.3b).

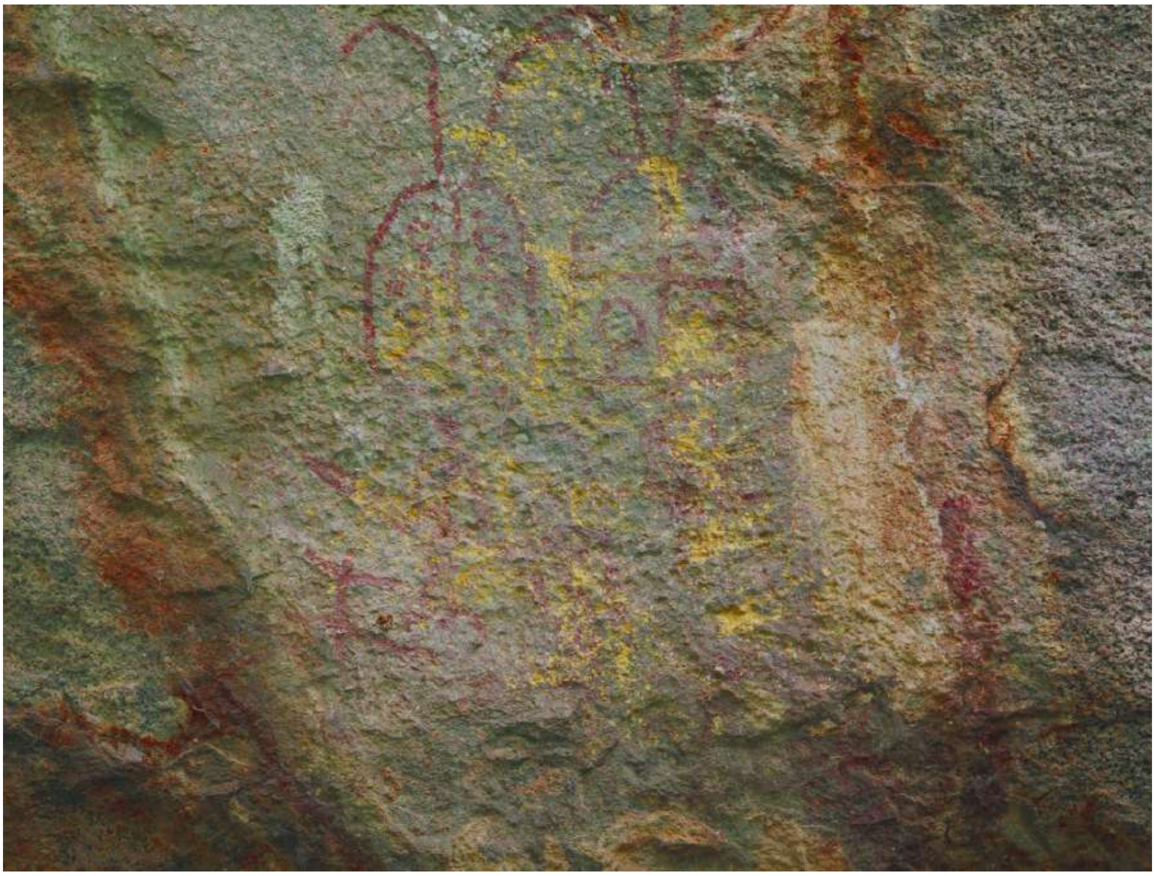


Fig. 4.15.3a Human and geometrical signs

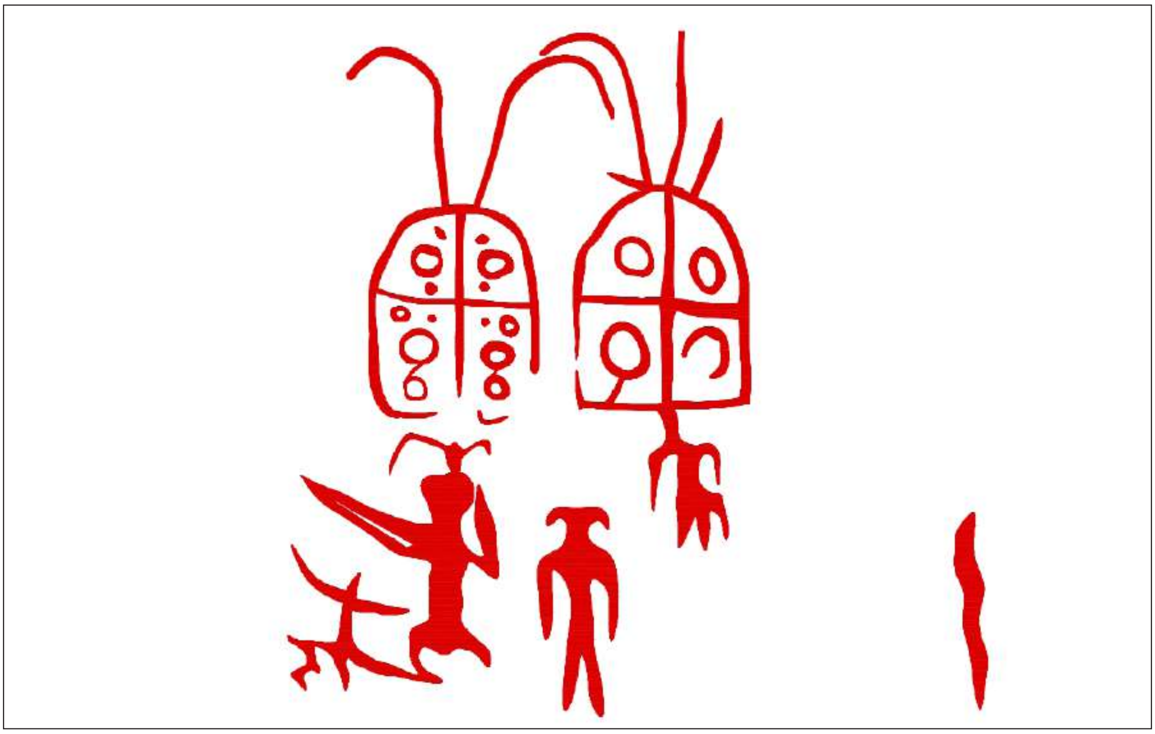


Fig. 4.15.3b *Human and geometrical signs*

Shallow cupules, eight in number, are found scattered, didn't form any pattern as such in its present orientation and position (Figs. 4.15.4a – 4.15.4b).

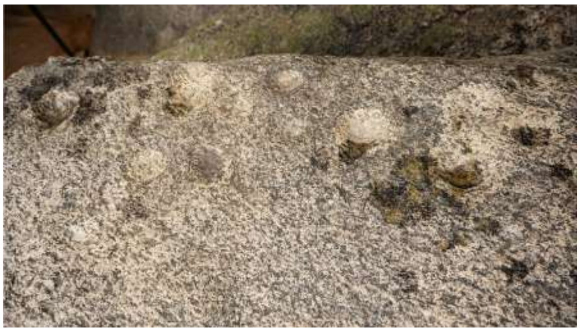


Fig. 4.15.4a Cup-marks

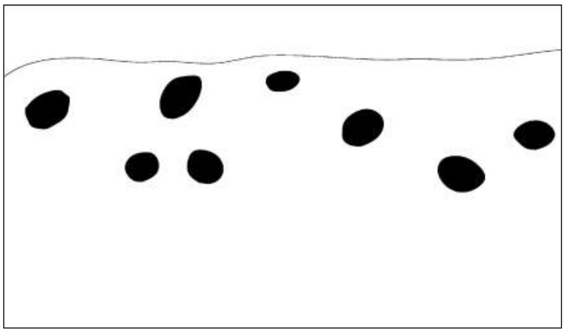
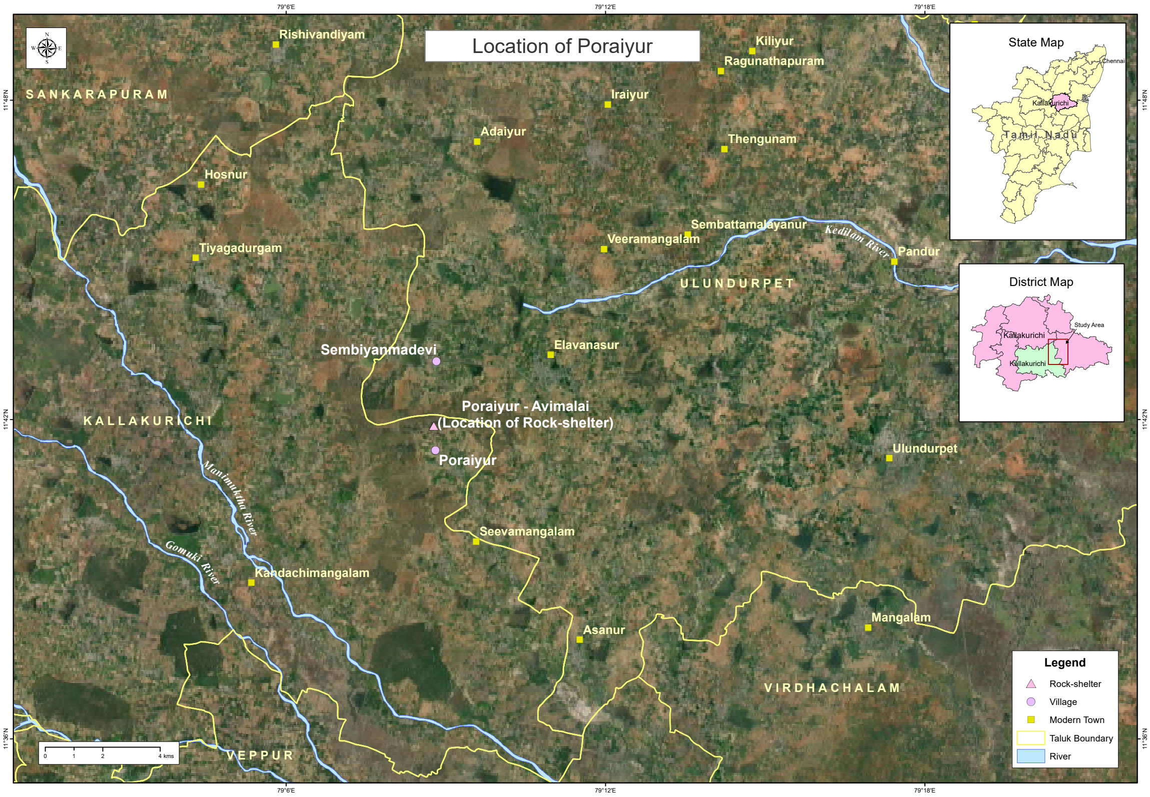


Fig. 4.15.4b Cup-marks

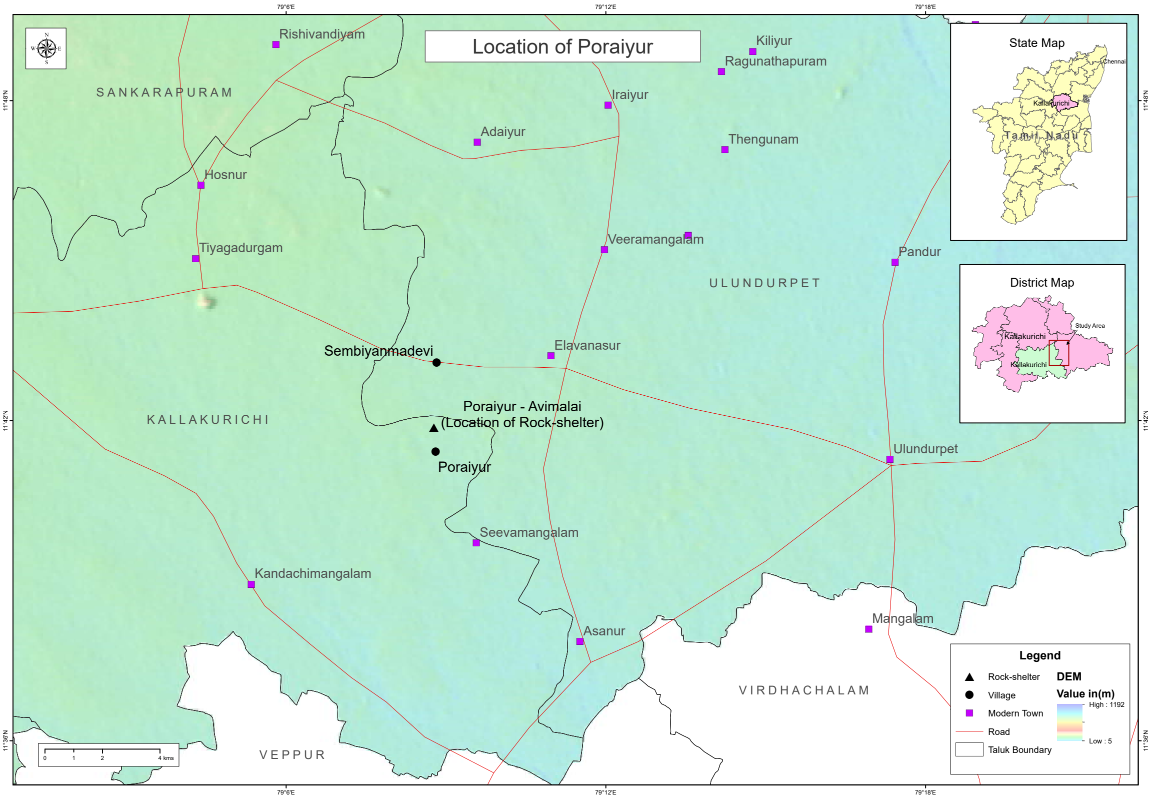
4.16 Poraiyur

Poraiyur (11.69790 E; 79.14623 E) lies at a distance of 24 km from Ulundurpettai and 3 km from Sembiyanmadevi on Kallakurichchi road (Maps 4.16.1- 4.16.2). Poraiyur is locally called Poraiyur. One has to take a diversion at Sembiyanmadevi which lies at a distance of 21 km from Ulundurpettai. The Poraiyur hillock locally is called *Aavimalai*.

The rock shelter lies 0.5 km to the north of Poraiattakoil. The west facing rock shelter has paintings in red (Figs. 4.16.1- 4.16.2). There is a deer and star-like depiction. The head of an animal, probably a deer, is also depicted. The megalithic cairn circles are found on the northeastern side of the rock shelter.


Location of Poraiyur
State Map
District Map
SANKARAPURAM
KALLAKURICHI
ULUNDURPET
VIRDHACHALAM
VEPPUR
Rishivandiyam
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
Tiyagadurgam
Sembattamalayanur
Veeramangalam
Pandur
Kedilam River
Elavanasur
Sembiyanmadevi
Poraiyur - Avimalai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Poraiyur
Ulundurpet
Manimukta River
Gomuki River
Seevamangalam
Kandachimangalam
Asanur
Mangalam
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
79°6'E
79°12'E
79°18'E
11°48'N
11°42'N
11°36'N

Map 4.16.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Poraiyur
State Map
District Map
SANKARAPURAM
KALLAKURICHI
ULUNDURPET
VIRDHACHALAM
VEPPUR
Rishivandiyam
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
Tiyagadurgam
Veeramangalam
Pandur
Elavanasur
Sembiyanmadevi
Poraiyur - Avimalai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Poraiyur
Ulundurpet
Seevamangalam
Kandachimangalam
Asanur
Mangalam
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1192
Low : 5
79°6'E
79°12'E
79°18'E
11°48'N
11°42'N
11°36'N

Map 4.16.2 Location of the rock-shelter

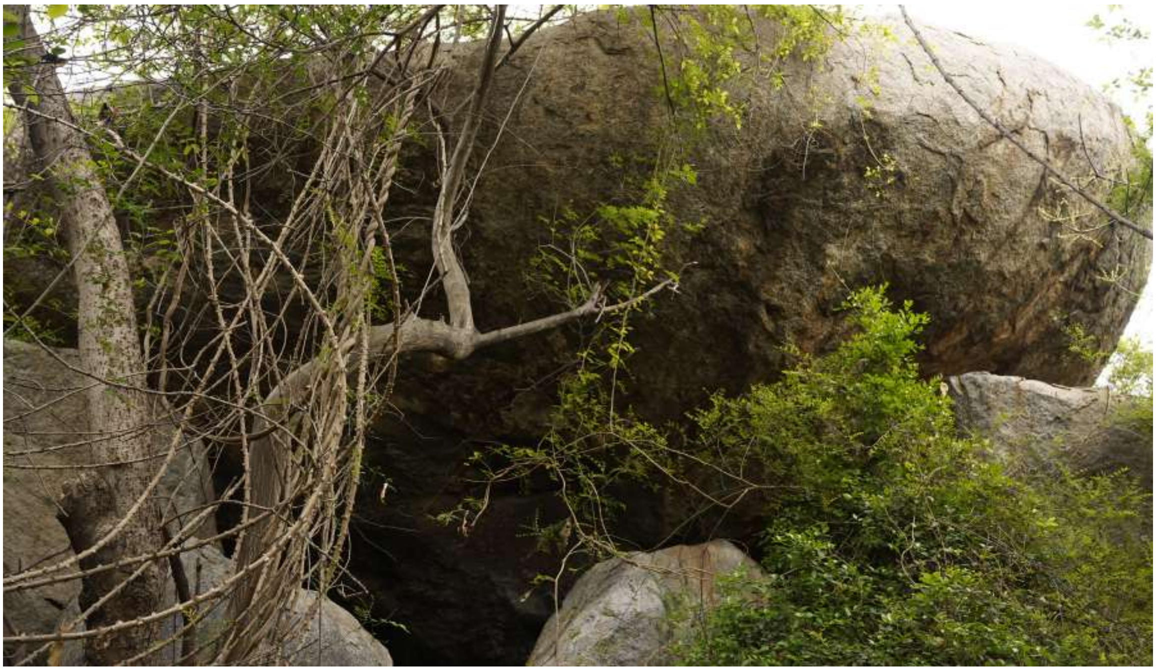


Fig. 4.16.1 General view of the rock shelter

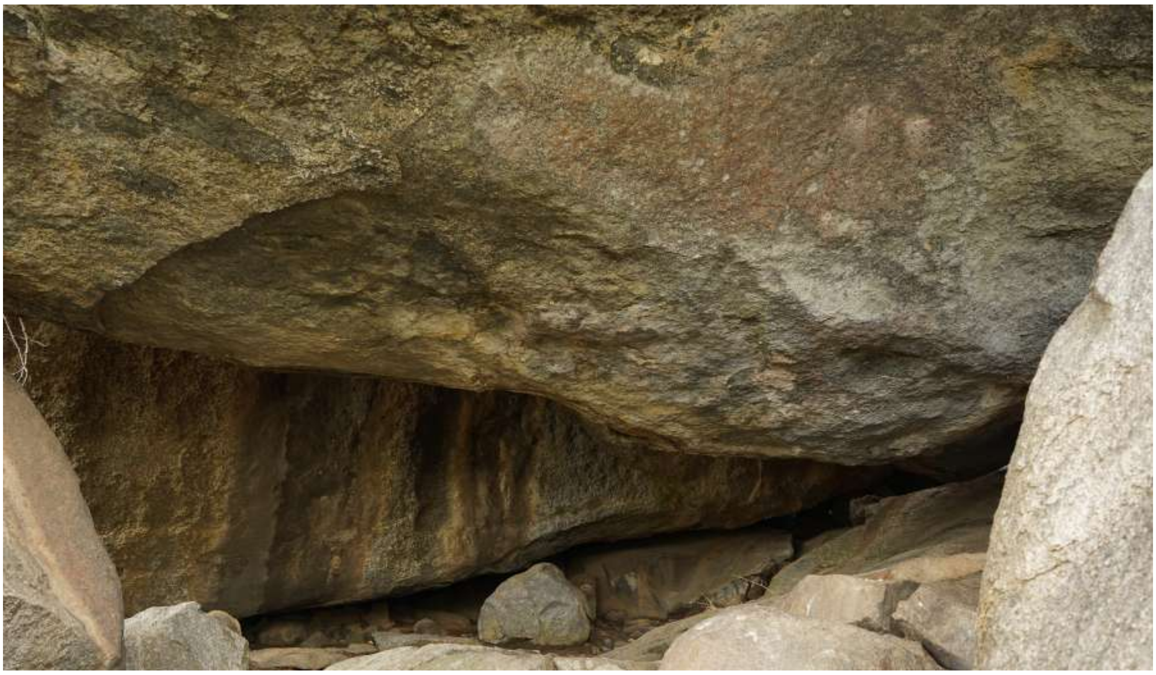


Fig. 4.16.2 General view of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 5 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 8 m and the total height of the inclined surface of the rock is about 8 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 7 m. The total area of the painted surface is 50x28 cm. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

The paintings are in red colour. In this rock shelter many paintings are visible but they are in a highly faded condition. The deer figure alone is clearly identifiable and above it two animal figures are found in faded condition. One more figure is drawn in dotted lines. The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of animals, arrows and geometric lines.

Panel Description

This site holds just a couple of pictographs made of red colour. Starting from top right, there is a diagonal cross made of a thick stroke and on the immediate right of it, one small horizontal stroke and one comparatively long vertical stroke intersecting at a right angle. Beneath it, there is a thin-lined red deer/antelope distinctly evident through its long straight horn, slim body and short tail. This pictograph is very aesthetically executed with attention given to the detail and stroke patterns. Right above the head of the previous image there is an arrow symbol pointing upwards and another simple straight line in red is also found above it (Fig. 4.16.3a -4.16.3b).

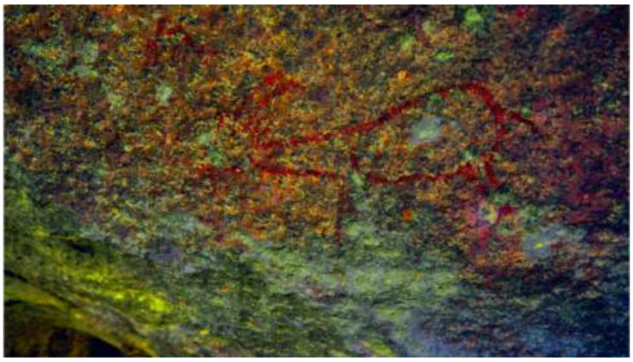


Fig. 4.16.3a Animal

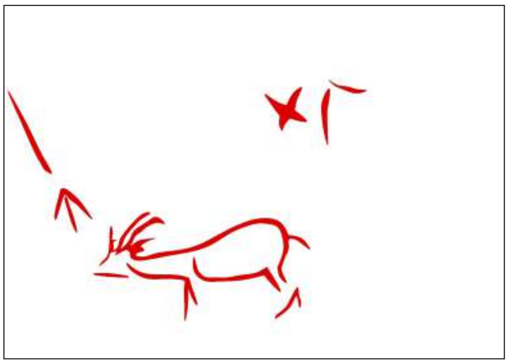


Fig. 4.16.3b Animal

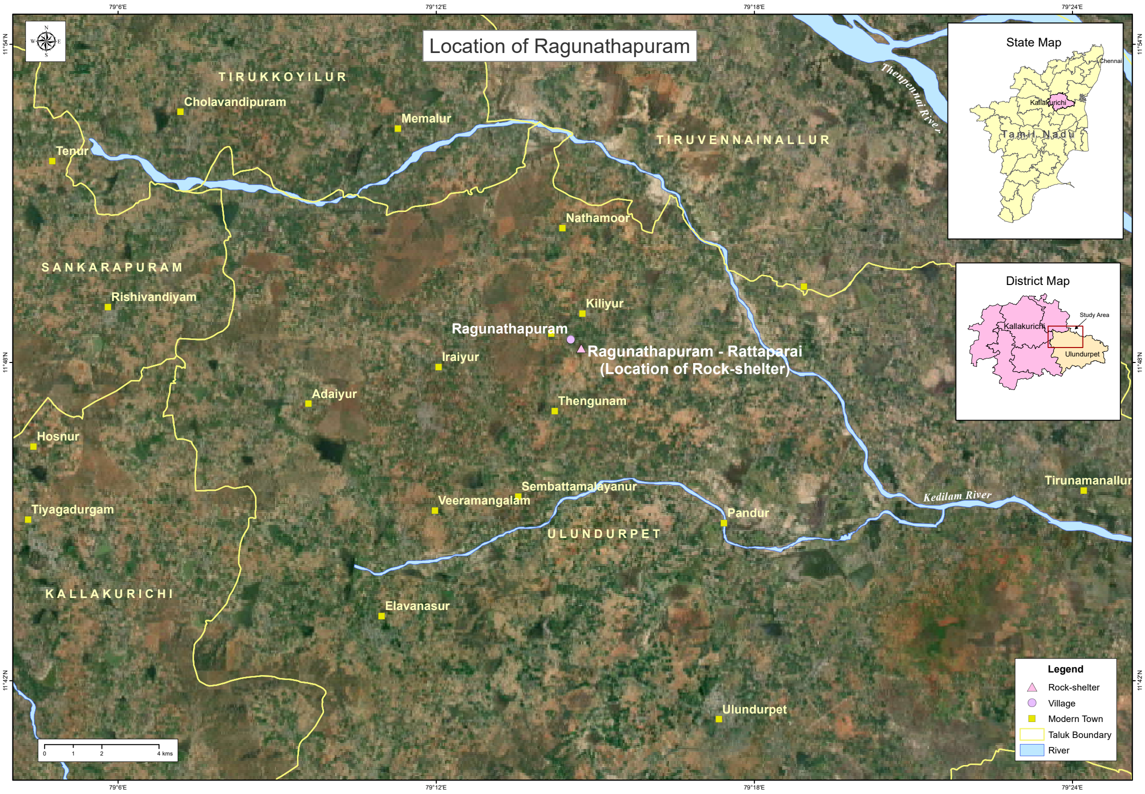
4.17 Raghunathapuram

Raghunathapuram (11.80443 E; 79.24556 E) is situated at a distance of 21 km from Ulundurpettai on Salem Road. One has to take a diversion at Sirupakkam which lies 9 km west of Ulundurpettai. Raghunathapuram lies at a distance of 12 km north of Sirupakkam and about 2 km south of Tengunam village (Map 4.17.1-4.17.2).

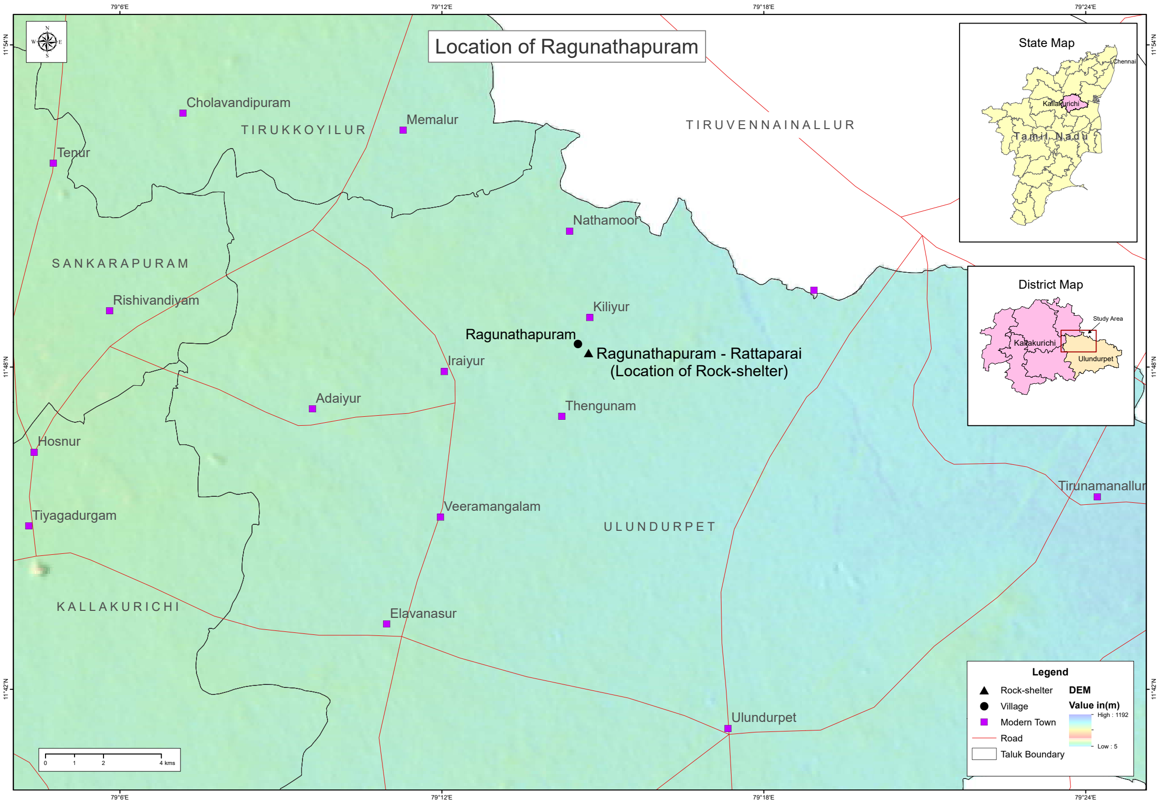
The rock shelter locally called *Rattaparai* is located in Chinnamalai, lies 1 km southeast of the village. The south facing rock shelter has beautiful paintings (Fig. 4.17.1). The deer, cattle and birds are depicted in two colours, yellow and red. The fillings are generally yellow in colour.

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 9 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 5 m and the total height of the inclined surface of the rock is about 2 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 6 m. The total area of the painted surface is about 3.20x2 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Ragunathapuram
TIRUKKOYILUR
Cholavandipuram
Memalur
Tenur
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Thenpennai River
Nathamoor
SANKARAPURAM
Rishivandiyam
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Ragunathapuram - Rattaparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
Sembattamalayanur
Veeramangalam
Pandur
Kedilam River
Tirunamanallur
Tiyagadurgam
ULUNDURPET
KALLAKURICHI
Elavanasur
Ulundurpet
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Kallakurichi
District Map
Study Area
Ulundurpet
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
79°6'E
79°12'E
79°18'E
79°24'E
11°54'N
11°48'N
11°42'N
0 1 2 4 kms

Map 4.17.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Ragunathapuram
Cholavandipuram
TIRUKKOYILUR
Memalur
Tenur
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Nathamoor
SANKARAPURAM
Rishivandiyam
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Ragunathapuram - Rattaparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
Tirunamanallur
Tiyagadurgam
Veeramangalam
ULUNDURPET
KALLAKURICHI
Elavanasur
Ulundurpet
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1192
Low : 5
79°6'E
79°12'E
79°18'E
79°24'E
11°54'N
11°48'N
11°42'N
0 1 2 4 kms

Map 4.17.2 Location of the rock-shelter

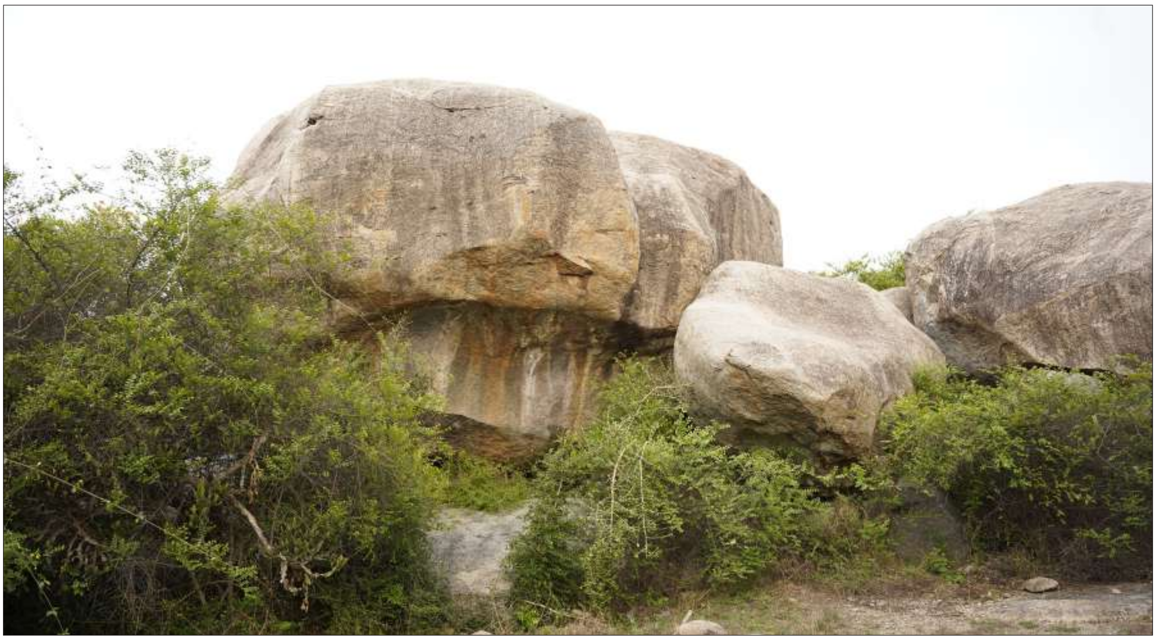


Fig. 4.17.1 General view of the rock shelter

Description

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of a herd, a animal, a buffalo and x-ray form of an animal, showing its inner organs.

Panel Description

The rock shelter is painted with red and yellow pigments. Paintings are drawn in two lines with red ochre and filled with yellow colour. A cow is drawn first and below it a deer figure. The cow is drawn in thick and thin lines and at some places the lines are not seen clearly. Beneath it, the deer is drawn in pale yellow pigment. This painting is drawn in lines and the inner parts of the body is clearly seen. It resembles X-ray type. Next to it, but on its right are a deer and bird figures drawn in both red and white. The outline is drawn in red and the inner part is filled with yellow pigment. It has a long neck and body; it has a crown or beak on its head. It looks like a peacock. Below this bird is a deer drawn in a slanting position and a human figure is drawn with a line pattern in red (Fig. 4.17.2a-4.17.2b).

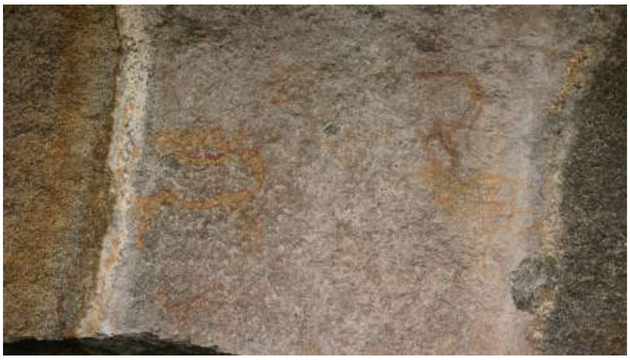


Fig. 4.17.2a Herd

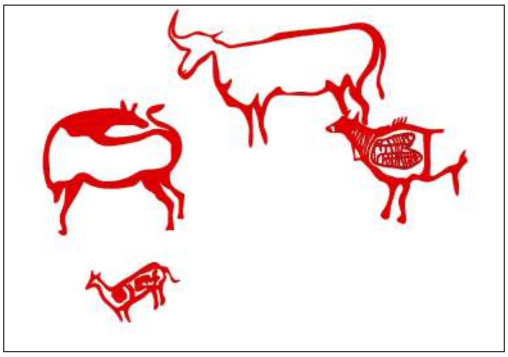


Fig. 4.17.2b Herd

The rock shelter is painted with red and yellow pigments. The paintings are in a vertical position. The yellow paintings are faded and could not be seen clearly. Three animal figures are drawn. The animal figure is seen with two short horns, short tail, long and slender legs, which all resemble a deer (Fig. 4.17.3a-4.17.3b).

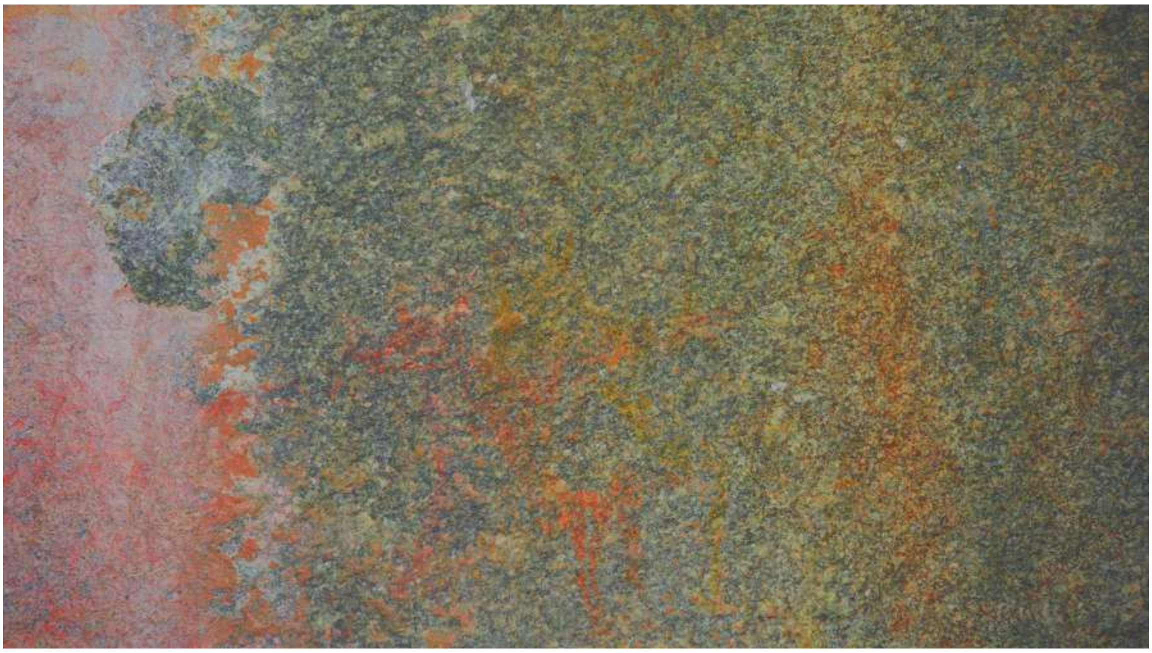


Fig. 4.17.3a Animal

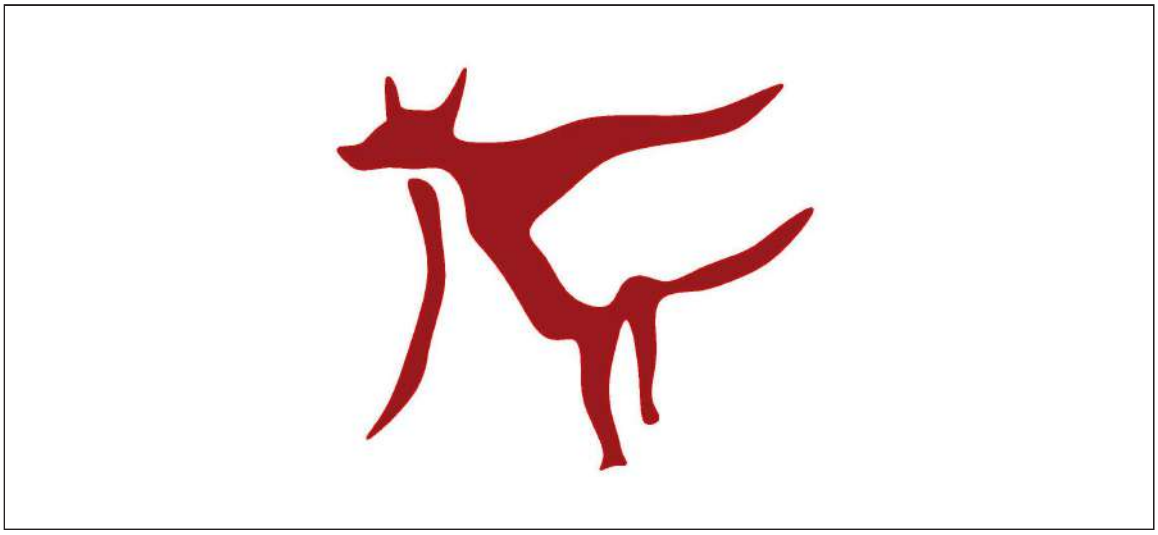


Fig. 4.17.3b Animal

In this painting, an animal figure is drawn. Painting is not seen clearly. An animal is drawn in lines and the inner parts of the body are also drawn. It resembles an X-ray type, at the same time internal lines are shown as decorative arches without an elegant shape. A cow with calf is drawn (Fig. 4.17.4a-4.17.4b).

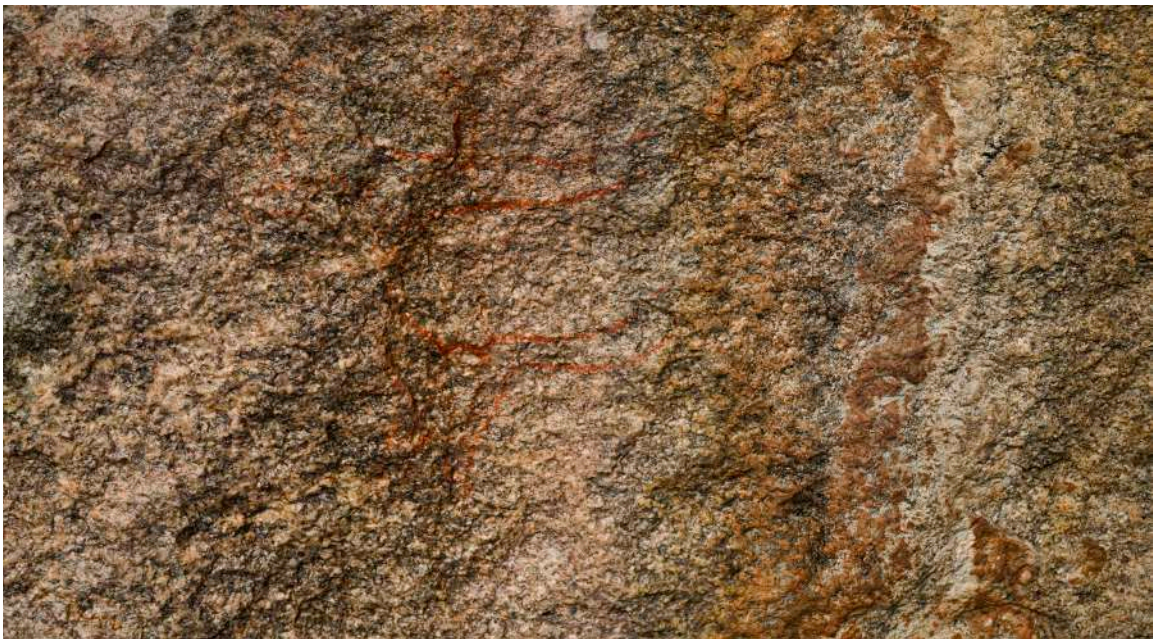


Fig. 4.17.4a *Animal*

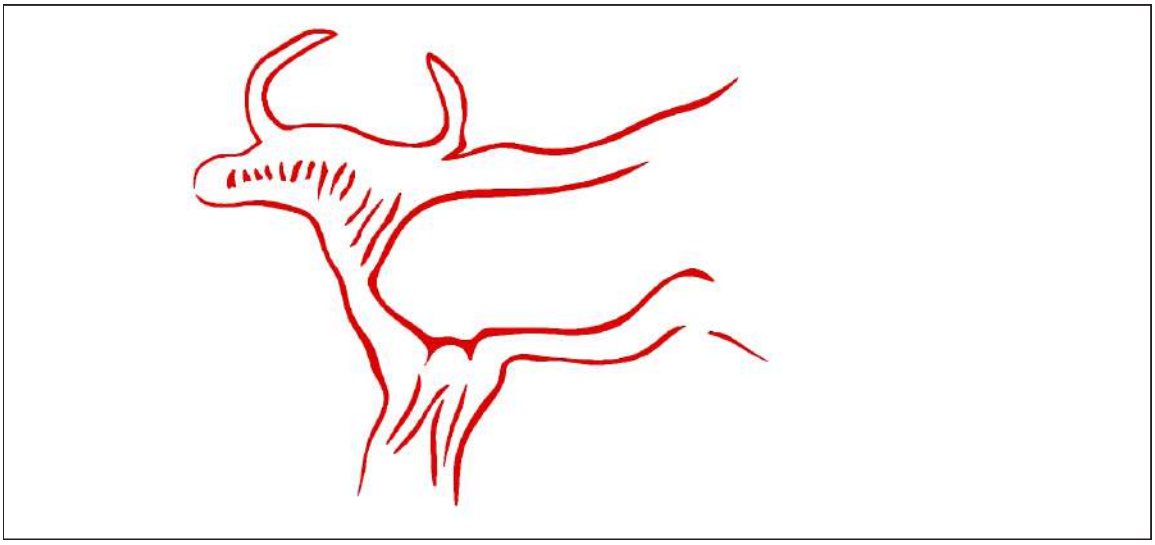


Fig. 4.17.4b *Animal*

The figures are (Fig. 4.17.5a-4.17.5b) painted with red ochre and yellow pigment. Paintings are drawn in two lines with red ochre and filled with yellow pigments. The paintings are faded animal and bird figures. First, a bird figurine is drawn on the left side of the panel. A bird in a sitting position is painted with yellow pigment. Near to this on the right side, an animal figure is drawn in two lines and filled with painting. An animal figure is seen with a massive body and long trunks which resemble an elephant. Next to these, two animal figures are drawn one by one. The animal is drawn in lines and the inner parts of the body are also drawn here. It resembles X-ray type, at the same time internal lines are shown as decorative arches without an elegant shape. One has a long body, short legs and short tail and another one has a long tail, long slender legs and large elongated head. The legs of an animal are drawn in action like jumping or running resembling a horse (Fig. 4.17.5a-4.17.5b).

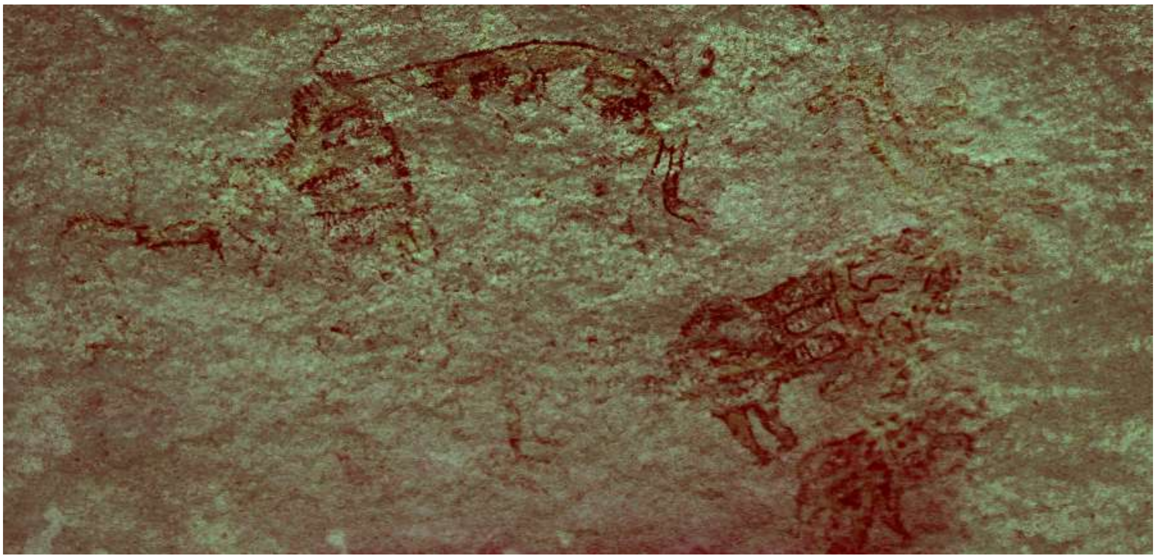


Fig. 4.17.5a X-ray form of animals

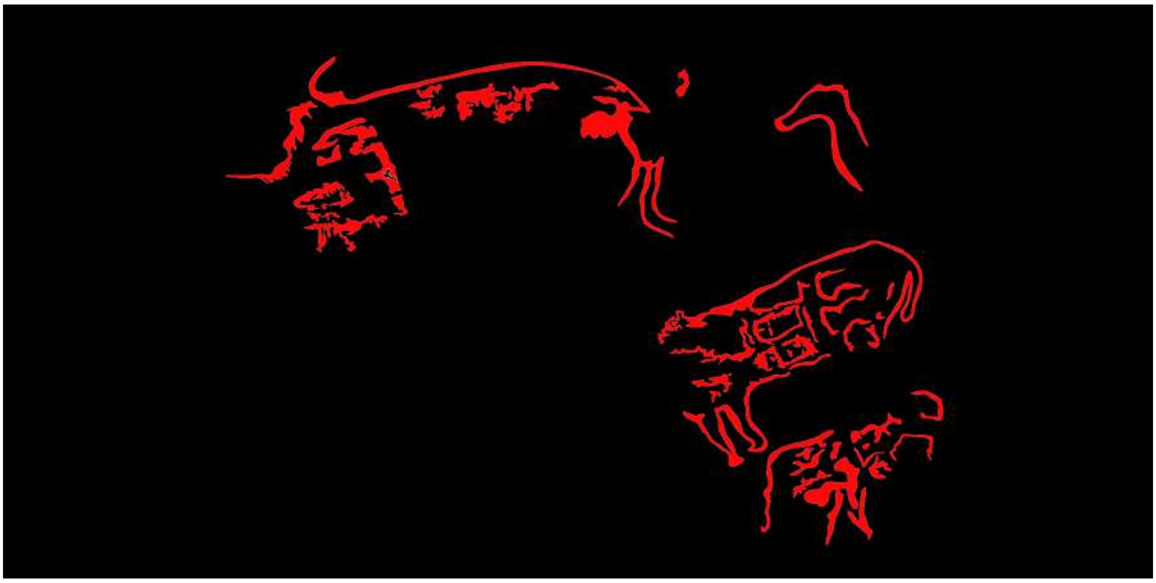
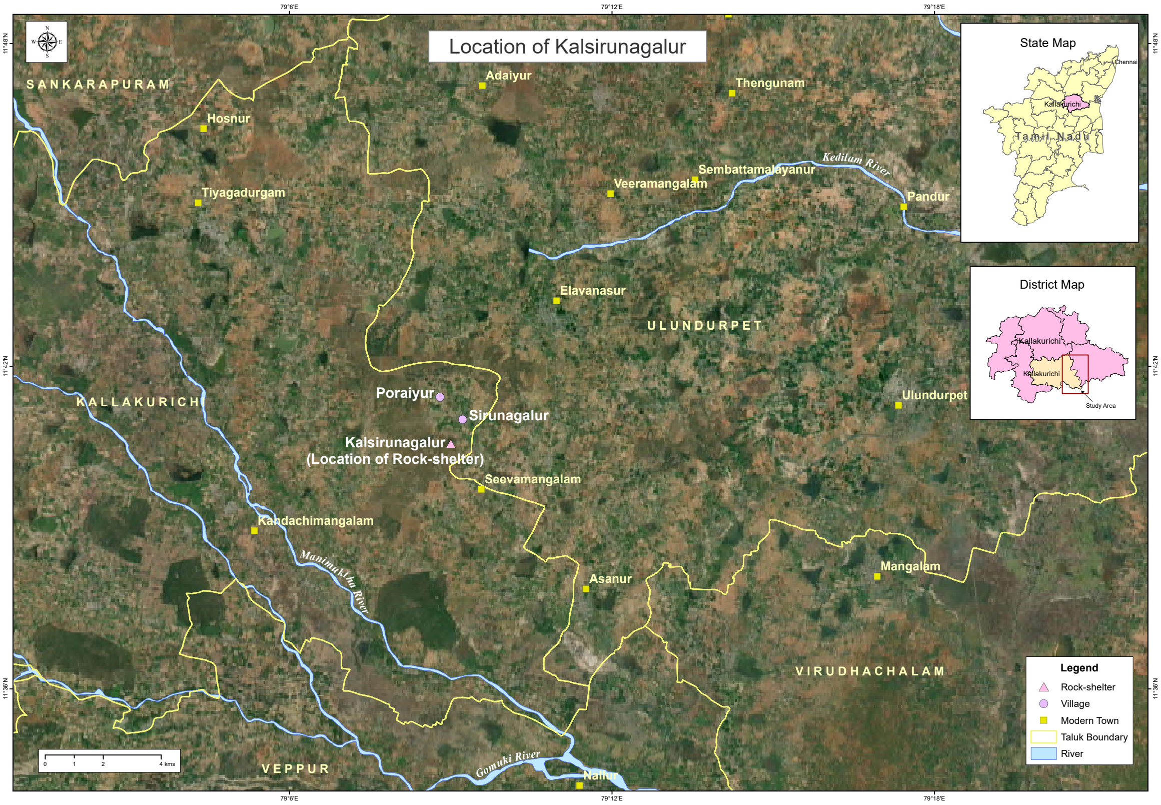


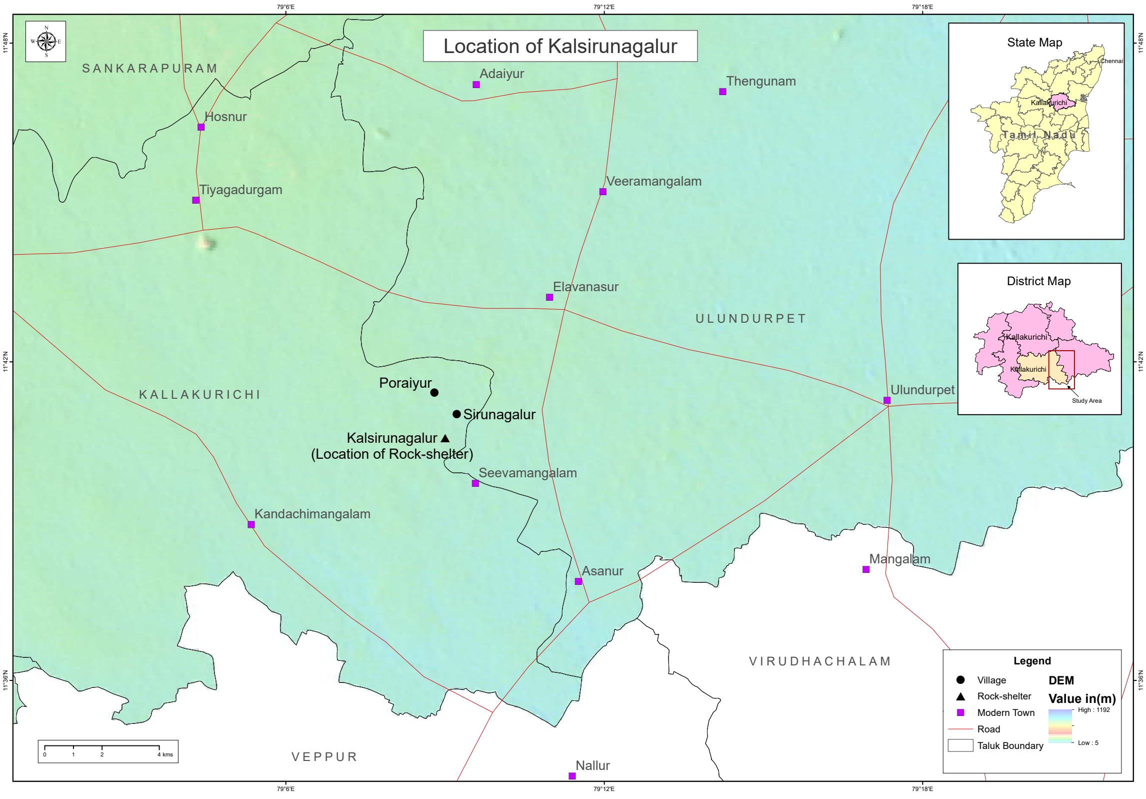
Fig. 4.17.5b X-ray form of animals

4.18 Sirunagalur

Sirunagalur (11.67602 E; 79.15003 E) lies at a distance of 24 km from Ulundurpettai and 9.6 km from Elavanasurkottai. It lies on the Kottaiyur-Poraiyur road and Kottaiyur lies 8.7 km away from Elavanasurkottai (Map 4.18.1-4.18.2). It is locally known as *Kalsirunagalur.* The rock shelter called Vedankal lies in the middle of a reserve forest known as kappukadu located about 5.6 km northwest of Kottaiyur. The vertical face of the east facing rock shelter contains paintings in white. Another interesting feature is the presence of the grooves on the brow of the shelter, generally observed on Jain beds of the Early Historic period. Such grooves are noticed in two rock shelters. Just 1 km east and opposite to the rock shelter, another painting is observed. The Iron Age megalithic cairn circles are noticed about 3 km to the north of the village and on the right side of the road leading to Poraiyur.


Location of Kalsirunagalur
SANKARAPURAM
Hosnur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Tiyagadurgam
Veeramangalam
Sembattamalayanur
Kedilam River
Pandur
Elavanasur
ULUNDURPET
KALLAKURICHI
Poraiyur
Sirunagalur
Kalsirunagalur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Seevamangalam
Ulundurpet
Kandachimangalam
Manimuktha River
Asanur
Mangalam
VIRUDHACHALAM
VEPPUR
Gomuki River
Nallur
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.18.1 Location of the rock-shelter


Location of Kalsirunagalur
SANKARAPURAM
Hosnur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Tiyagadurgam
Veeramangalam
Elavanasur
ULUNDURPET
KALLAKURICHI
Poraiyur
Sirunagalur
Kalsirunagalur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Seevamangalam
Ulundurpet
Kandachimangalam
Asanur
Mangalam
VIRUDHACHALAM
VEPPUR
Nallur
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1192
Low : 5

Map 4.18.2 Location of the rock-shelter

Rock Shelter

There are two shelters (Fig. 4.18.1-4.18.2). The first one is having a total length of 4.40 m, in which the painted area is about 4 m and the total height of the inclination surface of the rocky surface is about 3.50 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 5 m. The next shelter having a total length of 9 m and a breadth of 2 m with 60cmx100 cm painted area. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

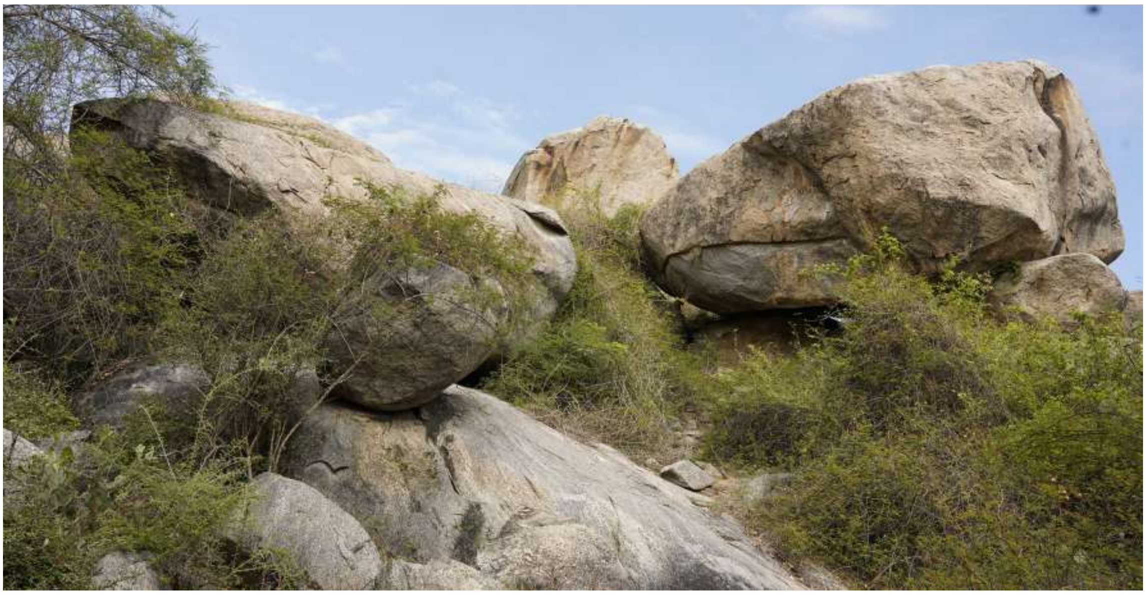


Fig. 4.18.1 General view of the rock-shelter

Description

The rock shelter paintings are in red and white colours. These paintings are drawn in a vertical pattern and a few paintings are in a faded condition. The figures are drawn individually. The human figures and animal figures are found. The painting shows a man holding a sword in his right hand and a shield on his left, standing in front of an animal. A man is shown in walking position, holding weapons in his hand. An animal figurine is drawn close to it.

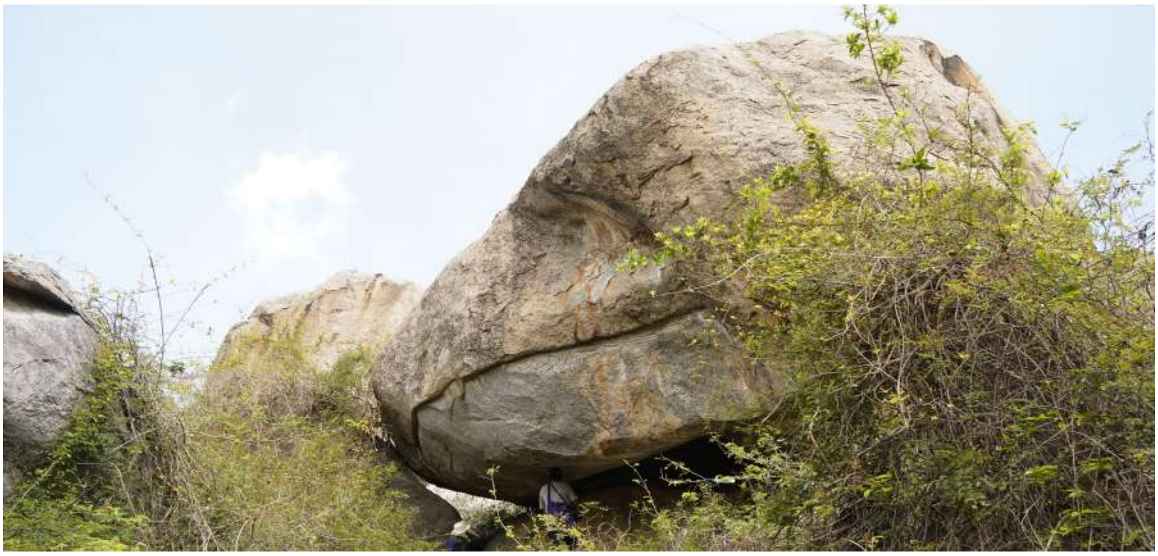


Fig. 4.18.2 General view of the rock-shelter

Panel Description

It is an in-filled white painting of a human figure, ithyphallic in nature shown carrying a weapon on the right side of the waist. The right hand is shown extended with a slight bend in the middle but the left hand is only half visible. The head portion is shown with a thick line extending towards the right, probably and indication of the banded hair/headgear (Fig. 4.18.3a-4.18.3b).

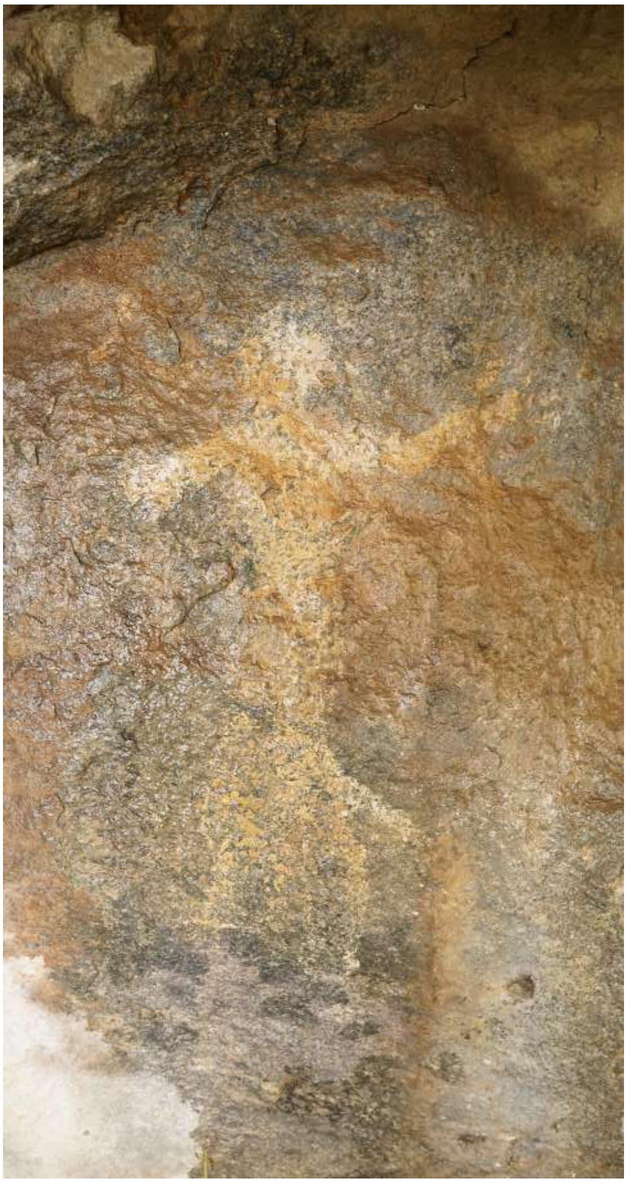


Fig. 4.18.3a Ithyphallic human figure with a weapon.

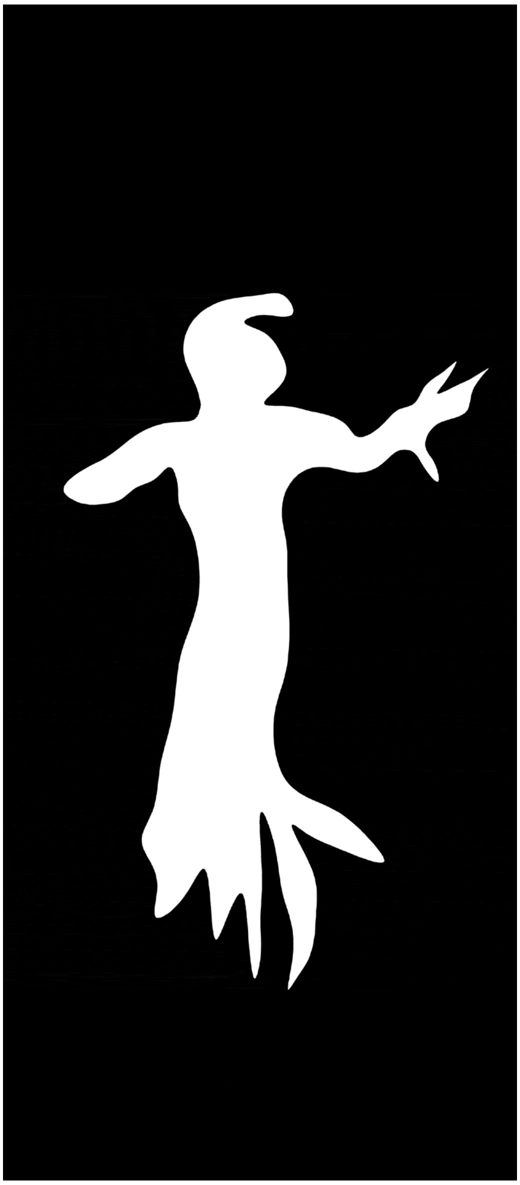


Fig. 4.18.3b Ithyphallic human figure with a weapon

Another white in-filled figure, mostly chipped off, difficult to recognize. At present, the top portion of the pictograph contains few identifiable features namely, the animal ear-like feature on the top right portion and a mouth-like feature on the top left suggesting it could be an animal figure (Fig. 4.18.4a-4.18.4b).

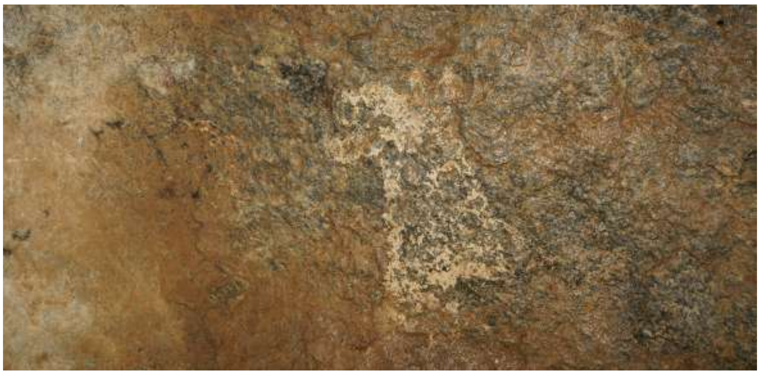


Fig. 4.18.4a Probably an animal

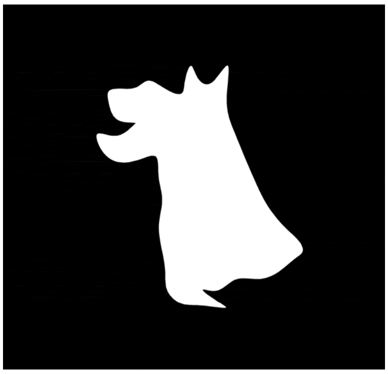


Fig. 4.18.4b Probably an animal

There are red images of two identifiable stick-fashioned human figures on the left and an abstract image on the right. The human figure on the extreme left is shown with wide open legs, right hand extended holding a weapon and the short left hand is shown probably indicating a bent holding of the object in the right hand. Intersecting the object, a hook-like line is drawn using it as a platform. Another human figure of stick fashion is shown in bent posture with the support of the weapon grounded (Fig. 4.18.5a-4.18.5b).

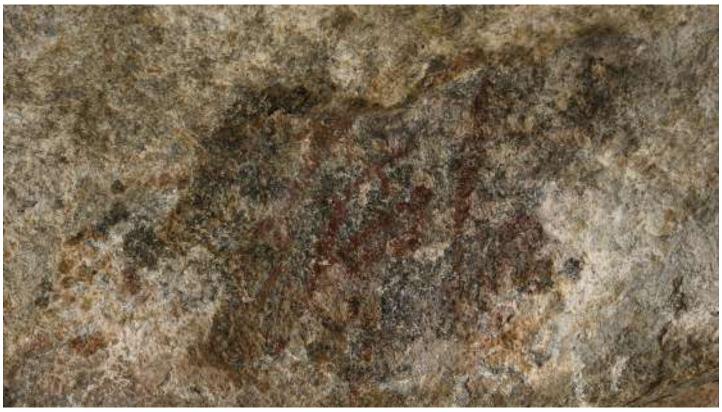


Fig. 4.18.5a Human and abstract images

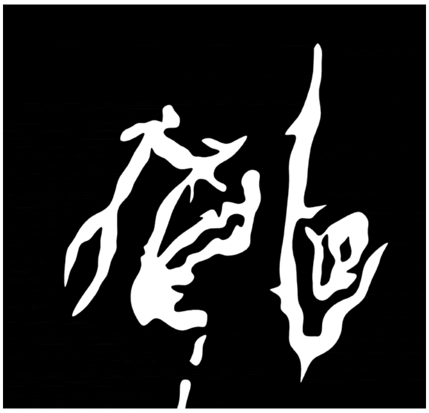
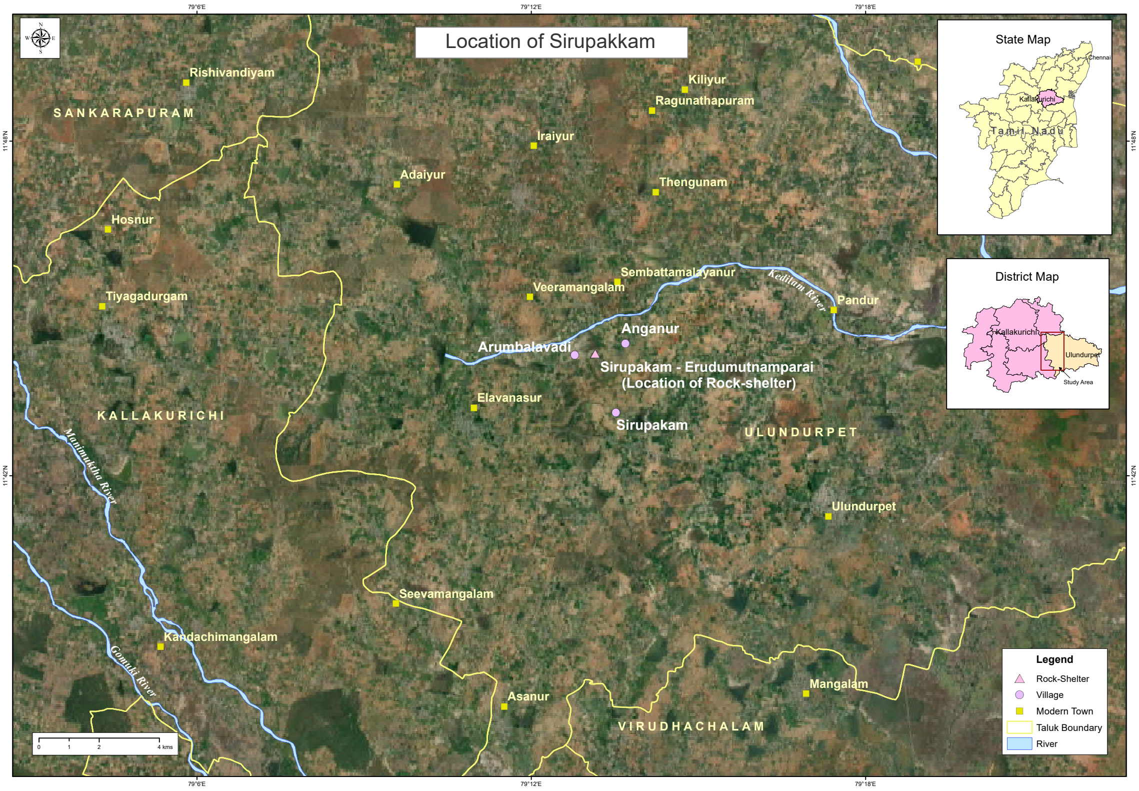


Fig. 4.18.5b Human and abstract images

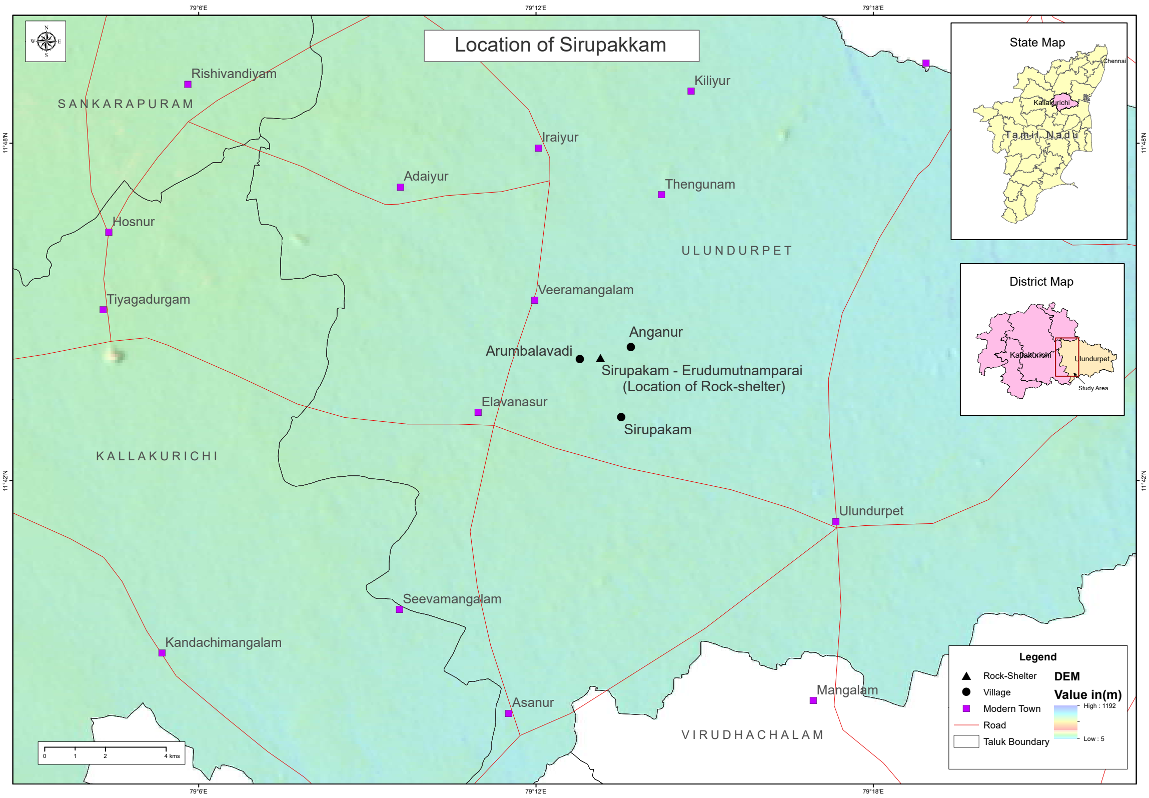
4.19 Sirupakkam

The village Sirupakkam (11.73640 N; 79.21910 E) lies 11 km to the west of Ulundurpettai and to reach the village one has to take a diversion at Unnapet on the Ulunderpet-Thiyagadurgam road. It lies 3 km to the north of Unnapet (Map 4.19.1-4.19.2).

The rock shelter locally called Erudu-mutnam-parai (erudu-mutnam-parai) lies inside the reserved forest called Kappukadu (kappukadu), about 4 km further north of Sirupakkam. The village Arumbalavadi lies 2 km west of the rock shelter and Angur lies 1 km to the east of the rock shelter. The north-facing shelter carries the paintings of humans, unidentified animal, peacock and cattle executed with red ochre (Fig. 4.19.1). The rock shelter measures 6.30 m in length and height of 6.30 m. There is a megalithic burial site consisting of cairn circles with a capstone entombing a sarcophagus. A few disturbed sarcophagi were also noted.


Location of Sirupakkam
79°6'E
79°12'E
79°18'E
11°46'N
11°42'N
Rishivandiyam
SANKARAPURAM
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
Tiyagadurgam
Sembattamalayanur
Veeramangalam
Kedilam River
Pandur
Anganur
Arumbalavadi
Sirupakam - Erudumutnamparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Elavanasur
Sirupakam
KALLAKURICHI
ULUNDURPET
Manimuktha River
Ulundurpet
Seevamangalam
Kandachimangalam
Gomuki River
Asanur
Mangalam
VIRUDHACHALAM
0 1 2 4 kms
State Map
Chennai
Kallakurichi
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Kallakurichi
Ulundurpet
Study Area
Legend
Rock-Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.19.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Sirupakkam
79°6'E
79°12'E
79°18'E
11°46'N
11°42'N
Rishivandiyam
SANKARAPURAM
Kiliyur
Iraiyur
Adaiyur
Thengunam
Hosnur
ULUNDURPET
Tiyagadurgam
Veeramangalam
Anganur
Arumbalavadi
Sirupakam - Erudumutnamparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Elavanasur
Sirupakam
KALLAKURICHI
Ulundurpet
Seevamangalam
Kandachimangalam
Asanur
Mangalam
VIRUDHACHALAM
0 1 2 4 kms
State Map
Chennai
Kallakurichi
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Kallakurichi
Ulundurpet
Study Area
Legend
Rock-Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1192
Low : 5

Map 4.19.2 Location of the rock shelter

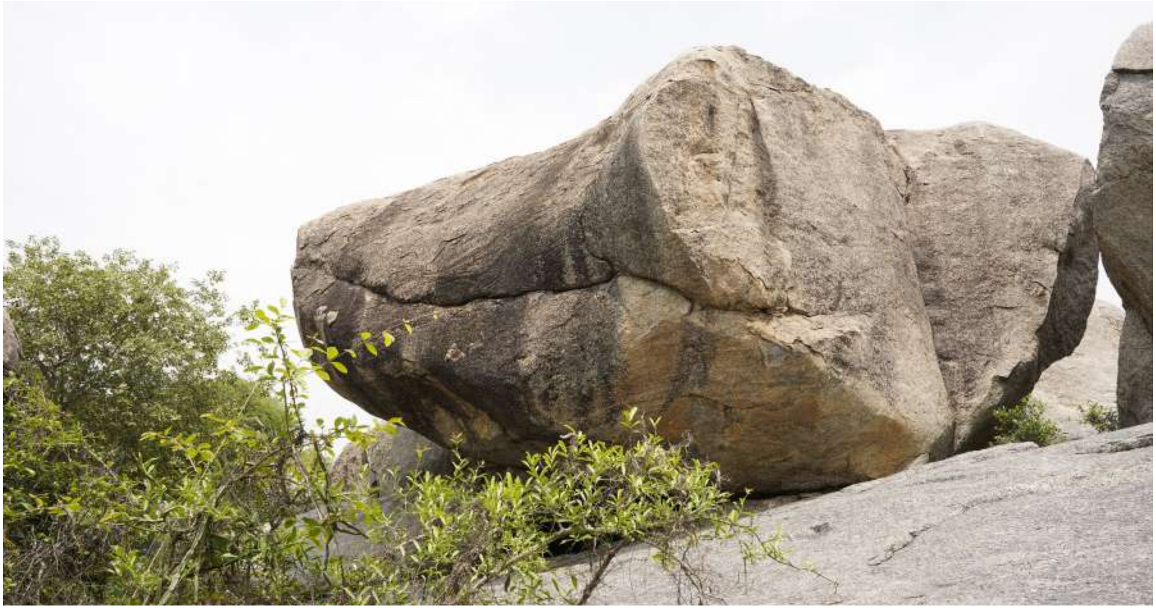


Fig. 4.19.1 General view of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 6.30 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 9.50 m and the total height of the inclination of the rock surface is about 6.30 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 6 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

More than twenty people could be easily accommodated in this rock shelter. It is a habitat for hunting and herding communities. Some of the drawings on the rock here are shown in red colour. Most of the paintings are faded and unrecognizable. At the top of the rock on the south side is a human figure standing with outstretched arms and a little below it another human figure is drawn.

A little below these figures is seen a headless animal figure and a headless human figure sitting on top of it. The long-tailed animal may be a horse, and just below it there are two oval-shaped lines drawn and just below that, a humanoid figure seated on a horse-like animal is also found in faded condition. On the opposite side of the figure is a human figure with a raised hand but faintly visible. Just below it, another human figure is shown but not clearly visible. When we look at all these, the clash of ethnic groups is seen as some humans are standing and others on in horse, both are fighting. A little further away, a five-pronged trident-like weapon and a ladder-like figures are drawn.

The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of rider, human, animal, abstract and unidentified images along with two human figures, geometrical design and abstract images.

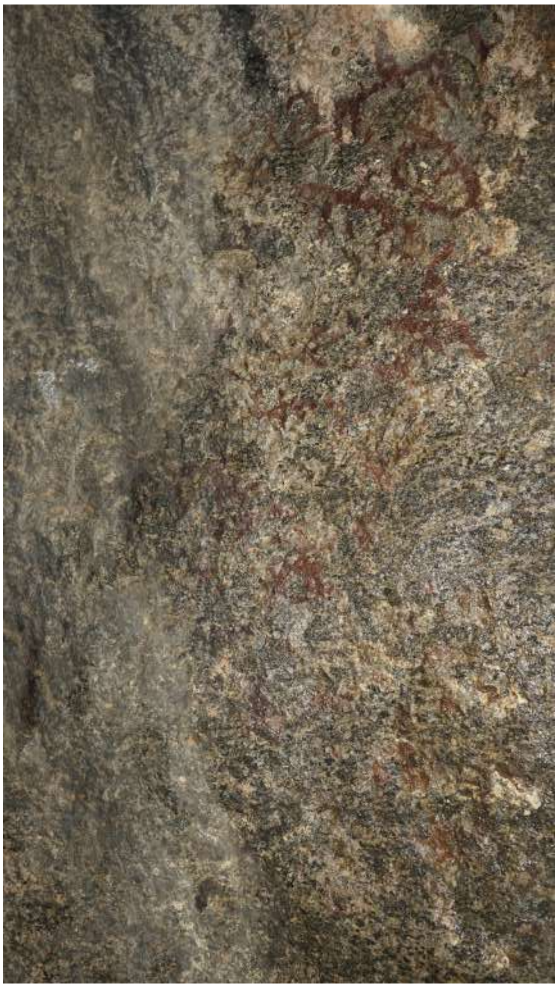


Fig. 4.19.2a *Rider, human, animal, abstract and unidentified images*

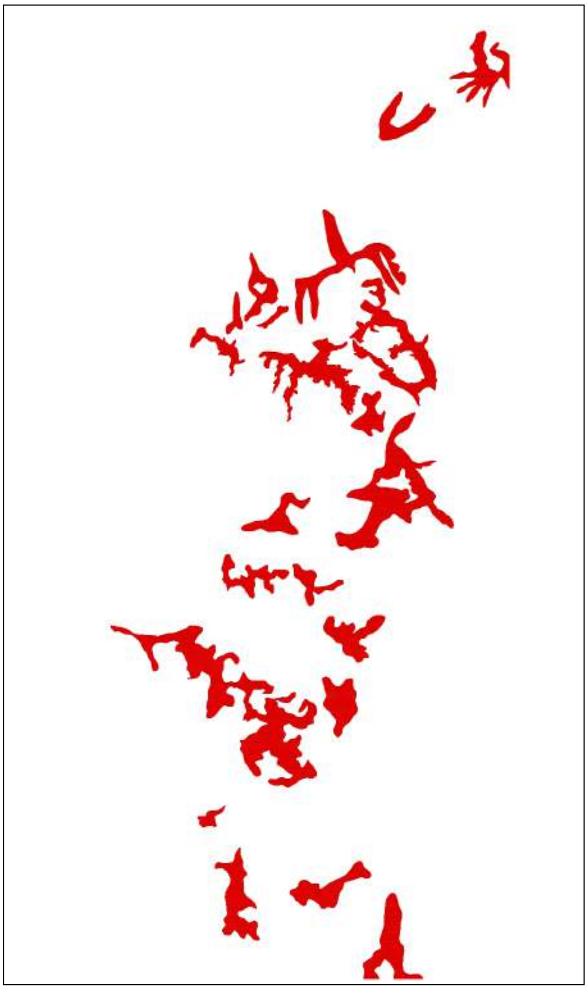


Fig. 4.19.2b *Rider, human, animal, abstract and unidentified images*

Panel Description

This cluster consists of small red ochre paintings of human, animals, riders and several abstract and indeterminate images. Orientation of each paintings differs variedly upon the utilization of the canvas space. Since most of the paintings are made in infilled fashion and a similar stylistic pattern suggests us it's thematic in nature rather than random individual sets of images (Fig. 4.19.2a-4.19.2b).

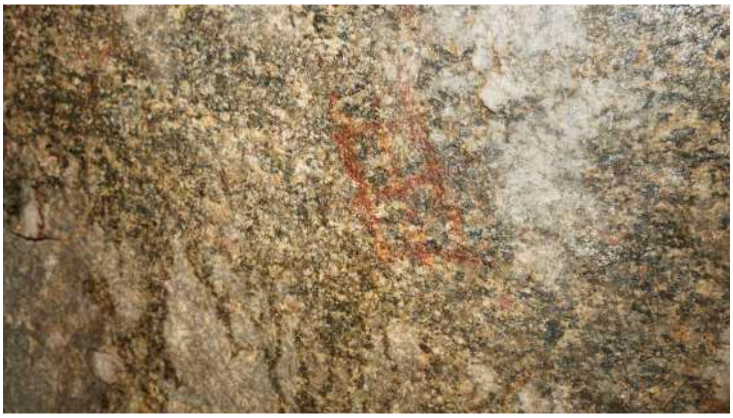


Fig. 4.19.3a *Geometric design*

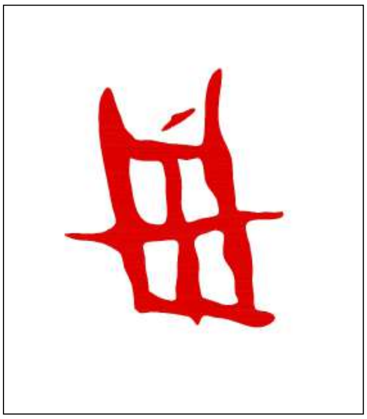


Fig. 4.19.3b *Geometric design*

Square-shaped geometric design with two intersecting lines drawn between the sides of the square and these intersecting lines and corners of the square are slightly shown extended outside the square (Fig. 4.19.3a-4.19.3b).

Two red ochre human paintings are made in stick and simple infilling fashion. The left one is bigger in size than the other, it's an ithyphallic human figure with the right leg shown in bent inward position but the left leg is not discernible. The body is represented with a elongated depiction. The right hand is loose and the left hand is shown extended with four-spiked like feature drawn at its end, probably denoting carrying an object. The head is shown with a banded hair/ head-gear. Beneath it, there is a small human figure of infilled fashion, wide open legs, upward pointing right hand and extended left hand probably pointing downwards (Fig. 4.19.4a-4.19.4b).

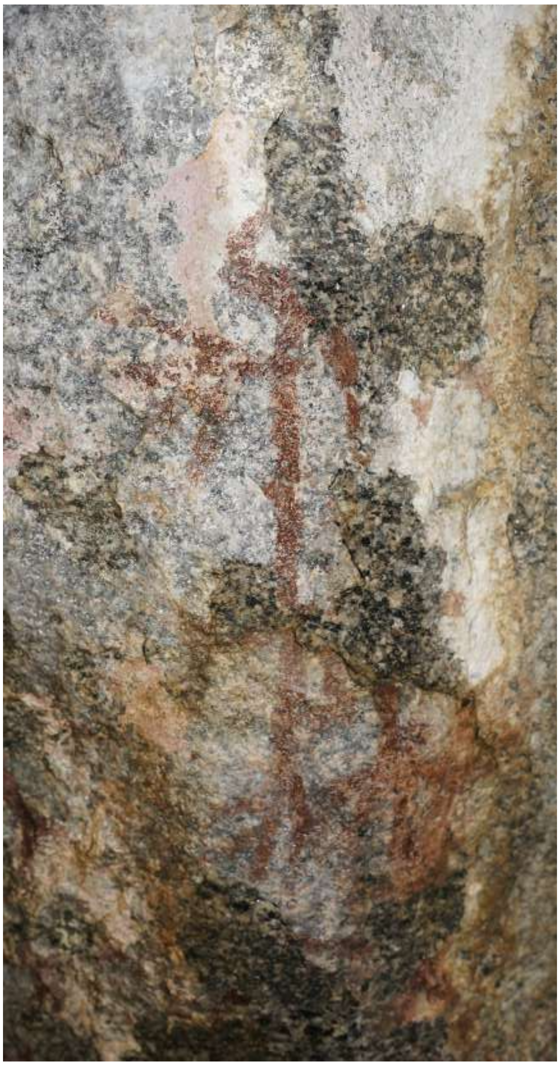


Fig. 4.19.4a Two human figures

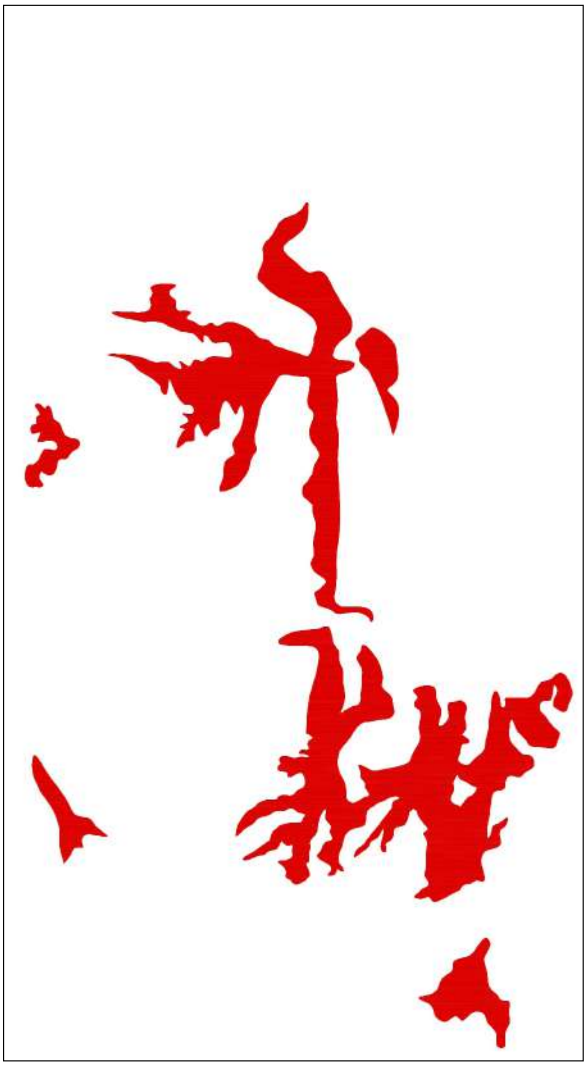


Fig. 4.19.4b Two human figures

Two simple stick fashion human figures are drawn with very thin strokes of lines. The left one is ithyphallic and the right is probably too. The left one is shown with a long horizontal line drawn at the waist portion indicating carrying a weapon, the right one is also shown but it doesn't continue through. The right hand of the left side

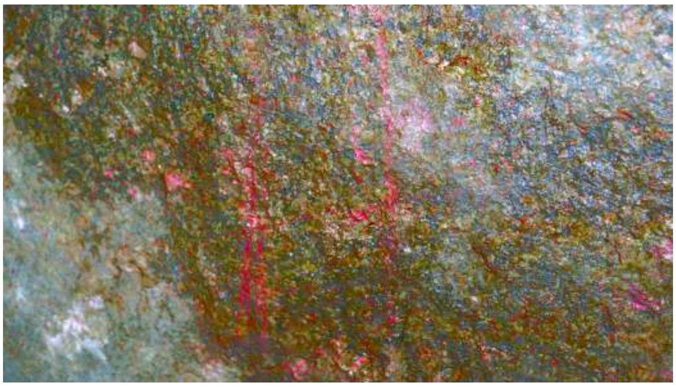


Fig. 4.19.5a *Two human figures carrying weapon*

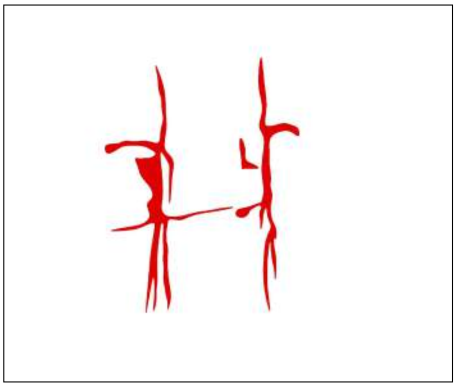


Fig. 4.19.5b *Two human figures carrying weapon*

human figure and the left hand of the right human figure are shown extended; the right hand of the left side human figure is shown kept loose and right hand of right-side human figure is shown bent and pointing up/ probably holding an object (Fig. 4.19.5a-4.19.5b).

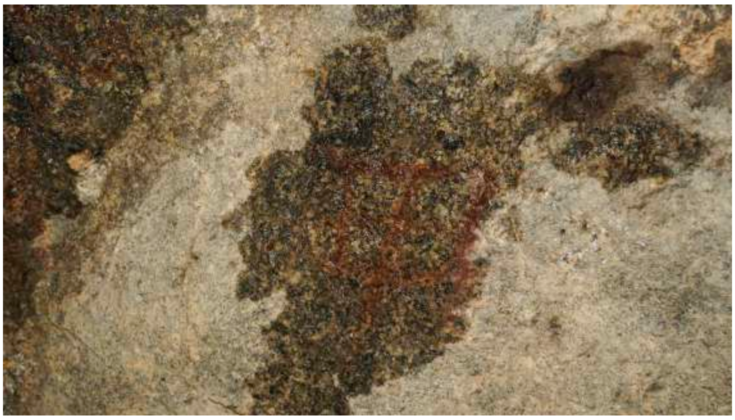


Fig. 4.19.6a *Geometric fish symbol*

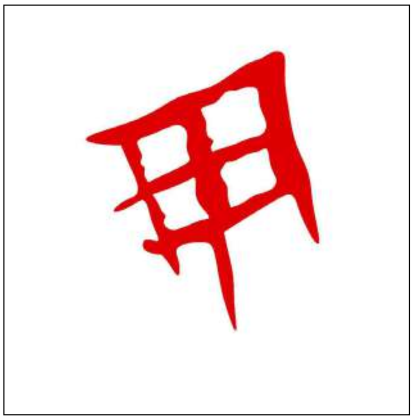


Fig. 4.19.6b *Geometric fish symbol*

Another red ochre composite geometric symbol of a fish is drawn in a simple line fashion. The painting is drawn with a diagonally rotated square with intersecting lines and side lines extending downwards like the fins of the fish (Fig. 4.19.6a-4.19.6b).

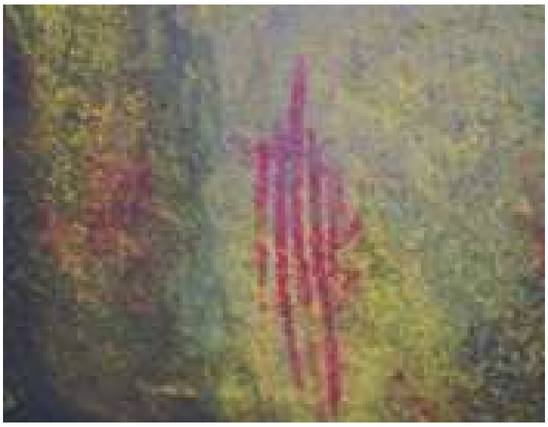


Fig. 4.19.7a *Rider and human figure*

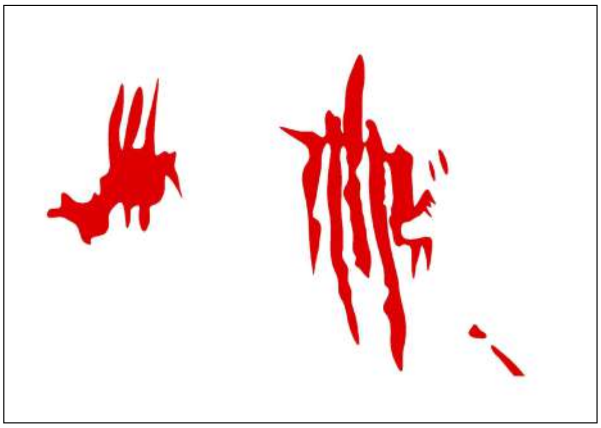


Fig. 4.19.7b *Rider and human figure*

On the left, there is a rider image, in-filled type in red ochre. To the right of it, an ithyphallic human figure is drawn in thick strokes. But the legs are also drawn from the shoulder line instead of the usual waist line. The left hand is shown kept loose but the right hand is shown bulkier with finger-like features (Fig. 4.19.7a-4.19.7b).

Exactly at the middle of the abstract image, there is a human figure drawn in infilled fashion shown holding something in the right hand and left hand at the waist (Fig. 4.19.8a-4.19.8b).

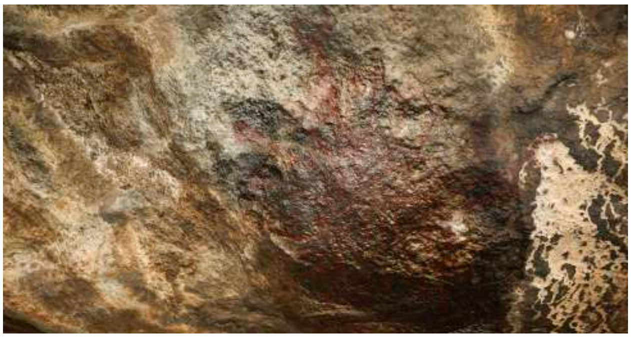


Fig. 4.19.8a Human and intricate abstrcat image

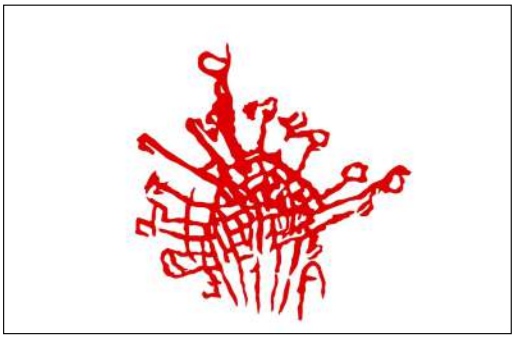
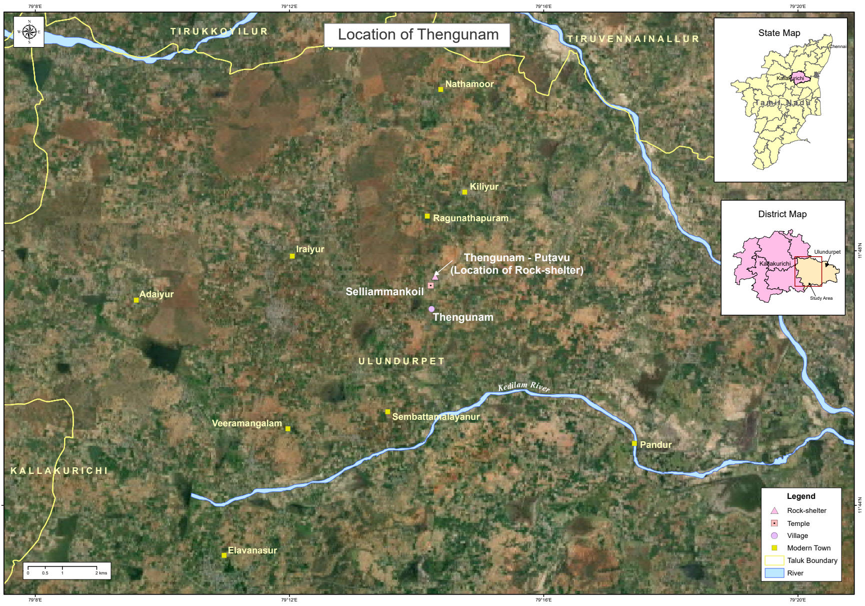


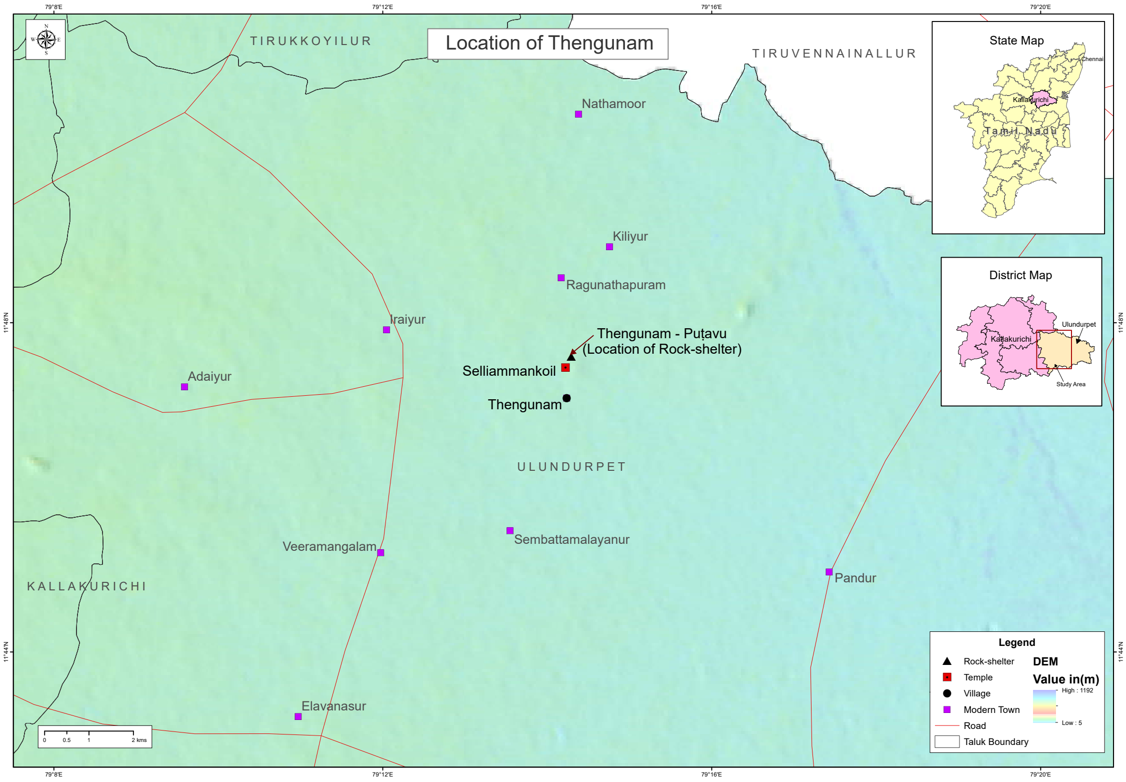
Fig. 4.19.8b Human and intricate abstrcat image

4.20. Thengunam

Thengunam (11.79119 N; 79.23723 E) lies at a distance of 20 km from Ulundurpettai and 9 km north of Sirupakkam which lies at a distance of 11 km to the west of Ulundurpettai (Map 4.20.1-4.20.2). The rock shelter is located 0.5 km further to the north of the village and it is a part of Selliammankoil. The eastern part of the south facing shelter is partly converted as a temple and the remaining half preserves the paintings. There is another rock shelter lying above the perennial pond a little to the east of the temple locally called *Putavu* (Fig. 4.20.1-4.20.3).


Location of Thengunam
TIRUKKOVILUR
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
Nathamoor
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Thengunam - Putavu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Selliammankoil
Thengunam
Adaiyur
ULUNDURPET
Kedilam River
Veeramangalam
Sembattamalayanur
Pandur
KALLAKURICHI
Elavanasur
State Map
Chennai
Kallakurichi
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Ulundurpet
Kallakurichi
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
79°8'E
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
11°48'N
11°44'N

Map 4.20.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Thengunam
TIRUKKOYILUR
TIRUVENNAINALLUR
ULUNDURPET
KALLAKURICHI
Nathamoor
Kiliyur
Ragunathapuram
Iraiyur
Thengunam - Puṭavu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Selliammankoil
Thengunam
Adaiyur
Veeramangalam
Sembattamalayanur
Pandur
Elavanasur
State Map
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
79°8'E
79°12'E
79°16'E
79°20'E
11°48'N
11°44'N

Map 4.20.2 Location of the rock shelter

The paintings are executed in red. Human, deer, cattle and several geometric symbol depictions are found. Besides this, rock engravings are noticed. The second rock shelter also contains paintings in red with depictions of a garland, human, tiger, deer etc. Another rock shelter had a polished surface due to continuous human activities.

Rock Shelter

There are four shelters in the neighbourhood. The painted surface of the first one is about 6 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 10 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 6 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 4.80 m.

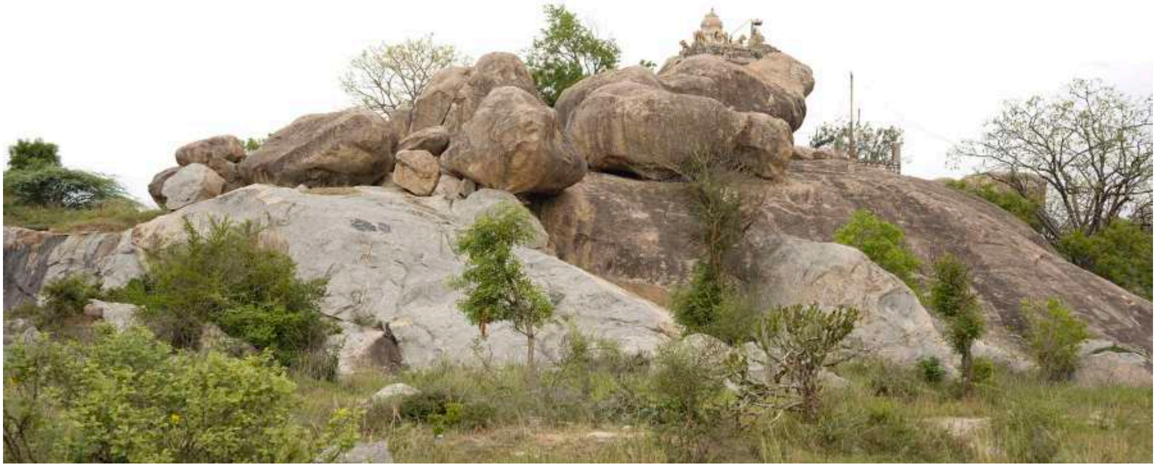


Fig. 4.20.1 General view of the rock shelter

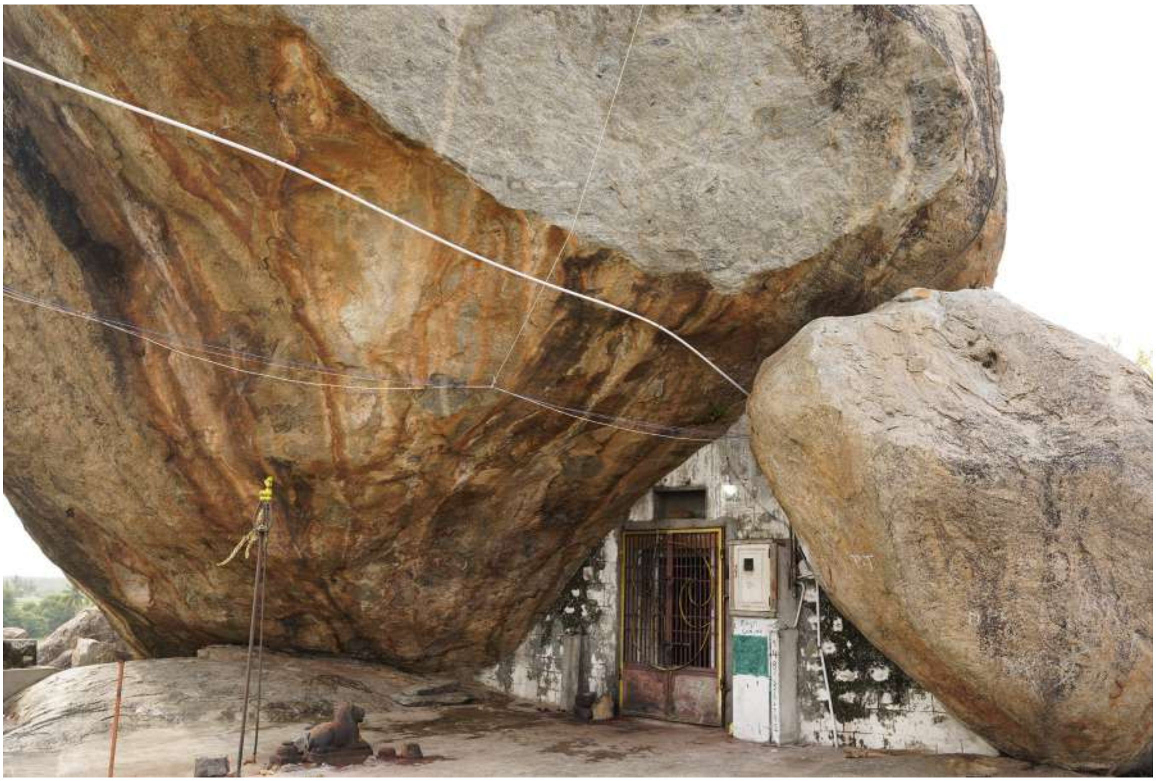


Fig. 4.20.2 General view of the rock shelter

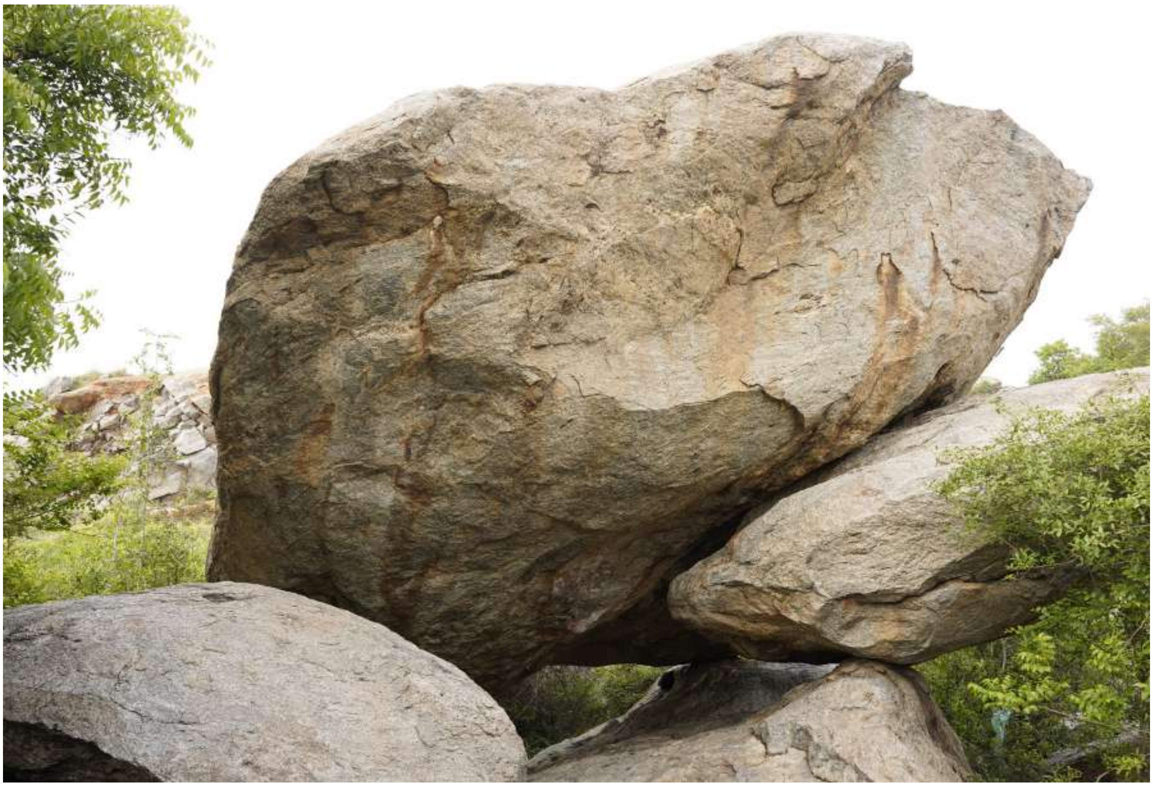


Fig. 4.20.3 General view of the rock shelter

The area of the painted surface is 6x10 m. The second shelter has a total length of about 1.5m and a breadth of about 2 m and over all painted area covers an area of

20cmx40cm. The third shelter has a total length of about 2x2m and the overall painted surface covers an area of 30cmx20cm. The fourth shelter is having a total area of 5x3m and over all painted area covers 3.5x1.50m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

The overall images represented in the rock shelters consist of human and animal figures, vertical lines, circular dots, a spear with a human and a trident.

Shelter-1

At present, some paintings are noticed in the shelter near the temple, located on the hillock. These are in very faded condition. On the north side of the rock shelter, figures are drawn in red colour, of which are two deers facing each other. They have long antlers without branches. One is clearly visible unlike the other. Above the deer, there are two lines in a wavy pattern, they look like a river or stream. In these pictures, a few animal figures with lines are drawn.

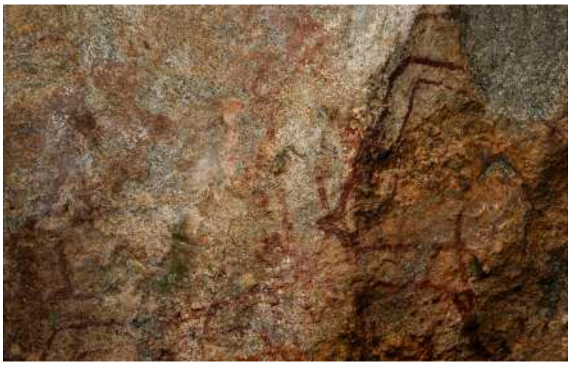


Fig. 4.20.4a Human and animal

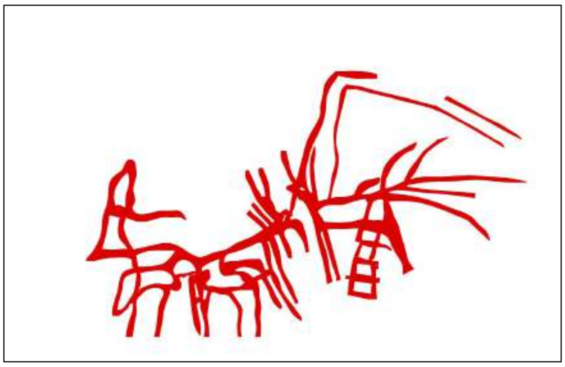


Fig. 4.20.4b Human and animal

Panel Description

In this rock art panel, paintings are made of red and white pigment. Figures of human, animals and abstract symbols are present. Two deer figures are painted in the middle of the panel; both are facing each other and are having short tails and long horns. The animal's body and legs are done in line, and the face portion is filled

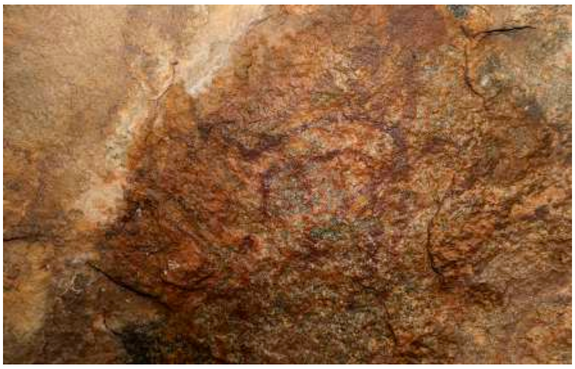


Fig. 4.20.5a Goat like animal

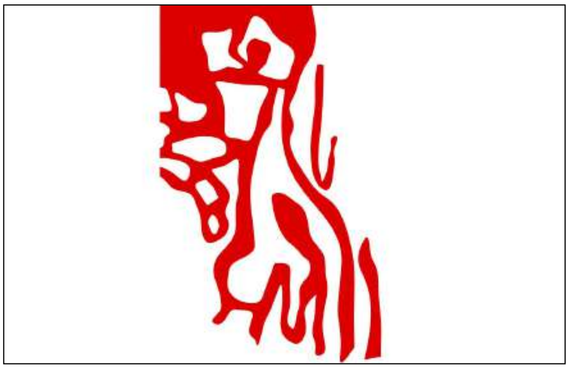


Fig. 4.20.5b Goat like animal

with red colour. Behind these deer figures, cattle are present and they are long and narrow. The deer is having a single stroke in the body portion on the right side (Fig. 4.20.4a-4.20.4b).

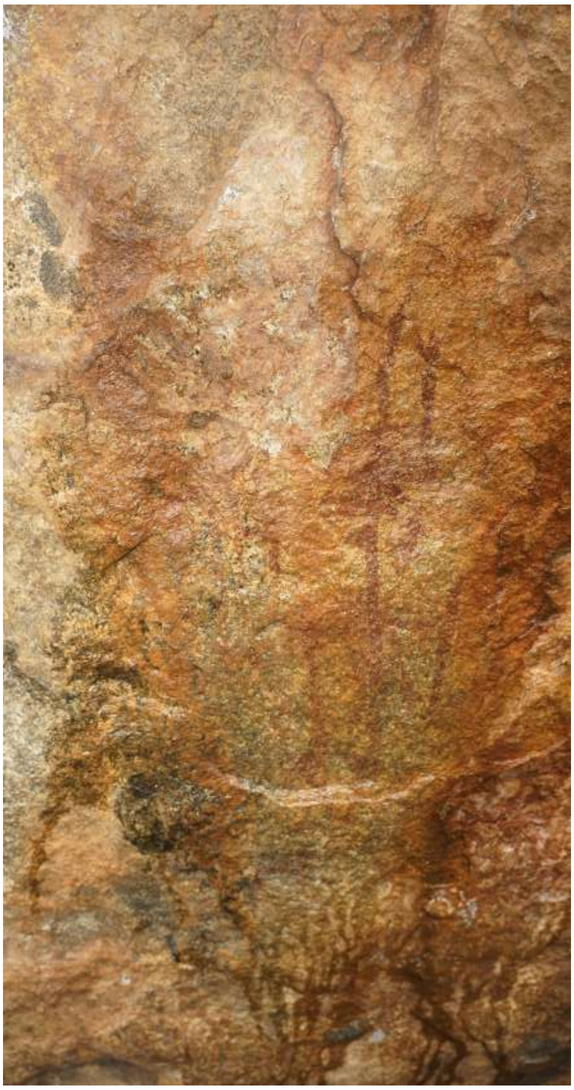


Fig. 4.20.6a Three vertical lines

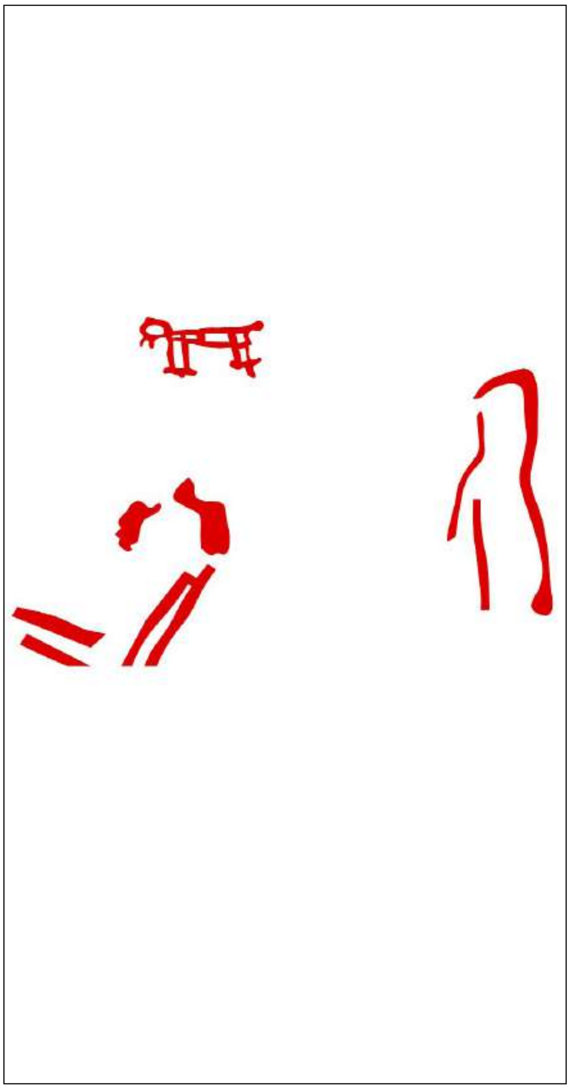


Fig. 4.20.6b Three vertical lines

A cluster having an animal figure is noticed which looks like a goat or cattle, which is drawn like the animal which stands in upward or downward, because the body position seems to be drawn by a curvy upraised tail. There are some lines beside this animal that are not unidentified due to poor preservation (Fig. 4.20.5a-4.20.5b).

Three long vertical lines are seen with curves because of the faded condition, it is hard to arrive at any conclusion (Fig. 4.20.6a-4.20.6b).

Shelter-2

The next shelter is about 50 m away from the first-one. Some figures are made in red on the northern side of a small boulder, except deer imageries all are faded and not clearly visible. It is noteworthy that there is a painting in the form of a garland with 18 dots. It appears like a hunting trap or it can be a decorative purposes.

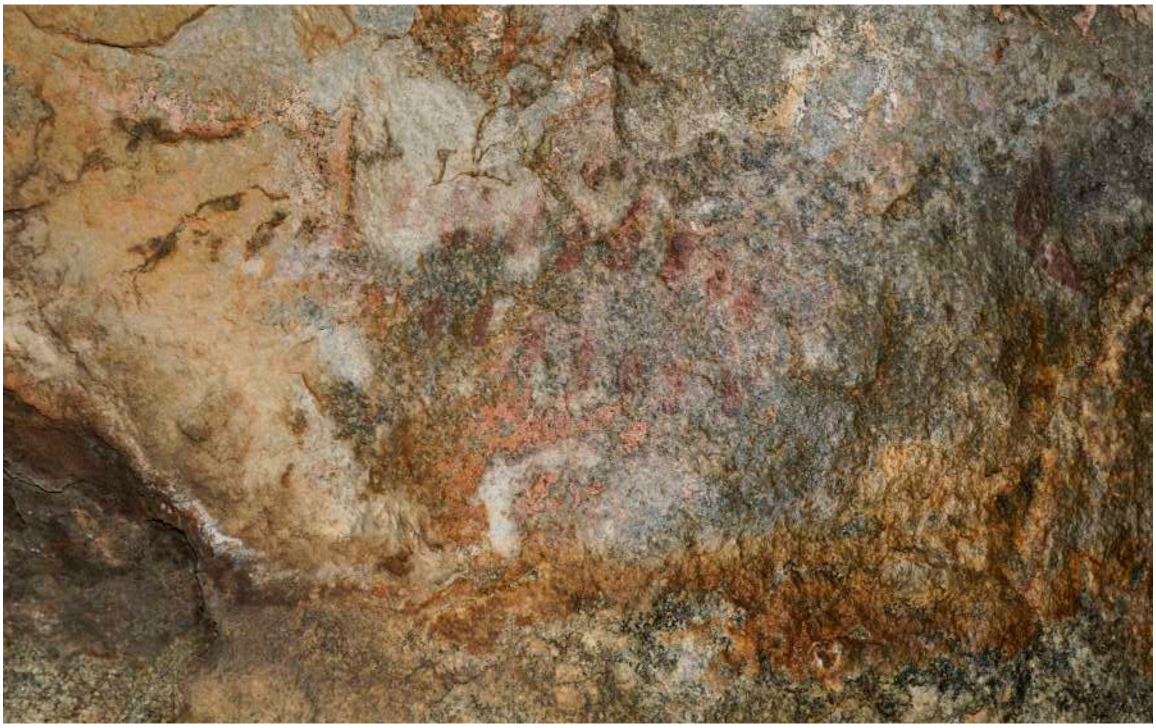


Fig. 4.20.7a Circular shaped dots

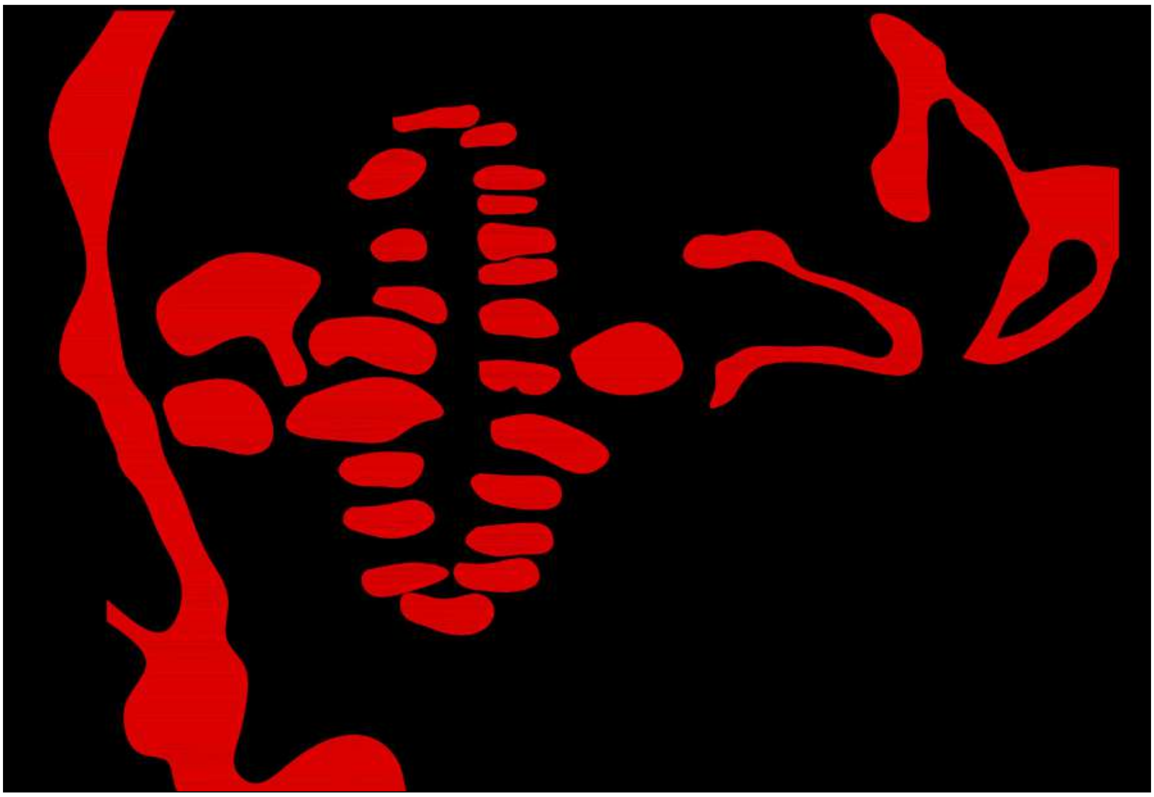


Fig. 4.20.7b Circular shaped dots

Panel Description

Dots of red pigment are seen in an irregular circular shape, may be a garland. Small concentric circles are drawn as dots here (Fig. 4.20.7a-4.20.7b).

Shelter-3

The shelter no.3 has stone carvings about 50 m to the west of the second shelter. Here, the paintings are divided into two parts. Both shelters are having human figures and they are walking near an animal. There are some circles and shapes on their head. These forms are deliberately carved.

Panel Description

The boulder having engravings or brushings was identified. They are divided into two segments. The first segment shows a human walking by an animal and their head portion is drawn in a circular shape. (Fig. 4.20.8a-4.20.8b).

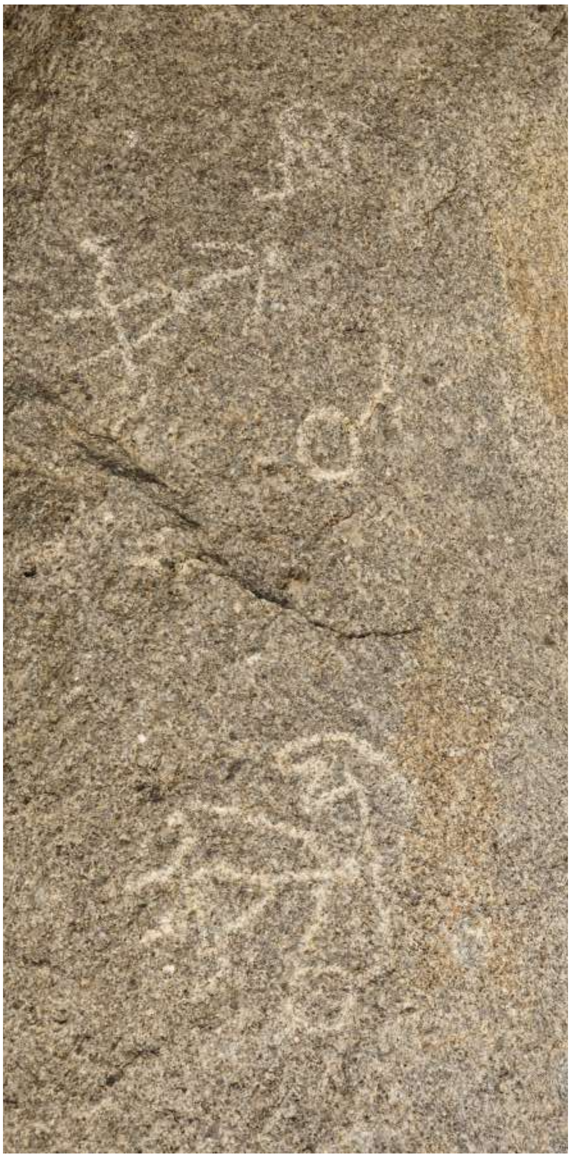


Fig. 4.20.8a Human and animal

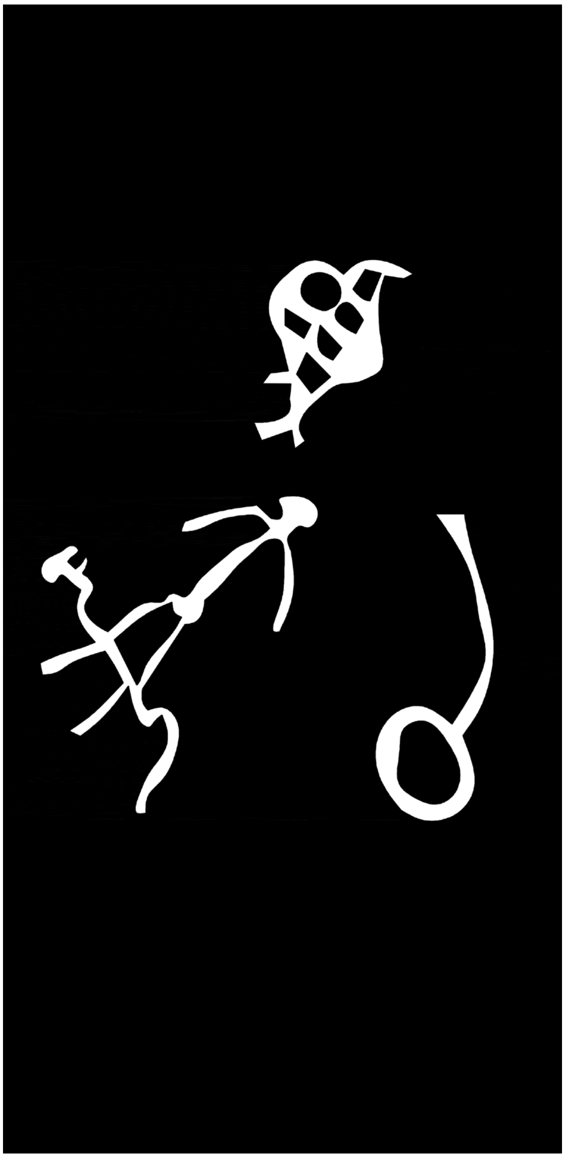


Fig. 4.20.8b Human and animal

Shelter-4

In this rock shelter, the paintings are in red. A few paintings are faded and not clearly visible. In this painting, a tiger-like animal is shown in a sitting position and opposite a small dog figure which is also depicted in a sitting position.

Panel Description

Two animals are seen, one small and the other big in size, both are facing each other. The left one is assumed to be a deer and the right one is a tiger by their physical morphology. The left one is smaller in size and has a small body, tail and short legs but the right one is in largar size with a big body with striped lines all over the body. But the figure is drawn like facing each other (Fig. 4.20.9a-4.20.9b).

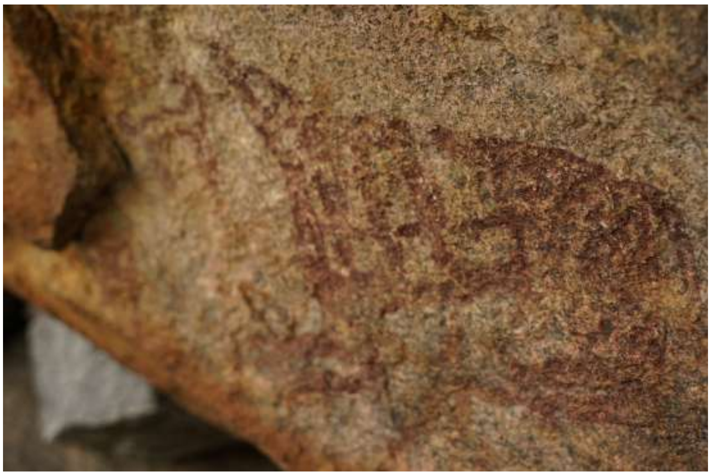


Fig. 4.20.9a Two animals

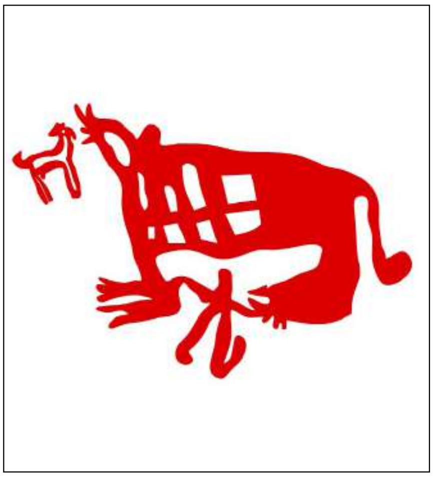


Fig. 4.20.9b Two animals

Two human figures were painted in red, they ride over an animal and hold a long weapon in one hand, looks like a spear and the other hand holds a shield. The spears are drawn in cross position which looks like they are trying to depict a battle scene. The left part of the image is shown with another animal figure and a human rider. The man is holding some object in his hand, but the image is heavily faded (Fig. 4.20.10a-4.20.10b).

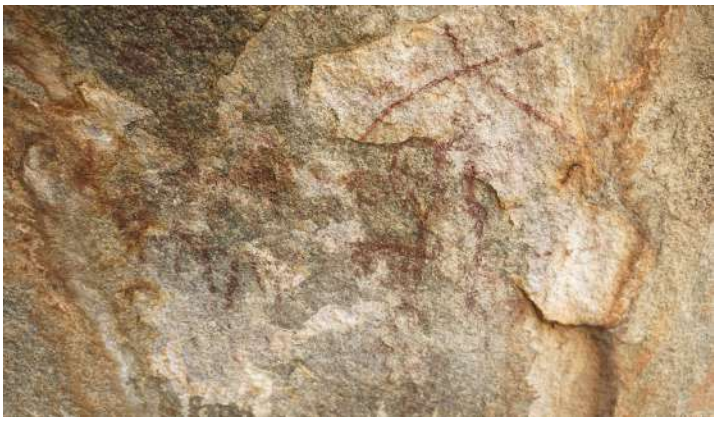


Fig. 4.20.10a Two humans

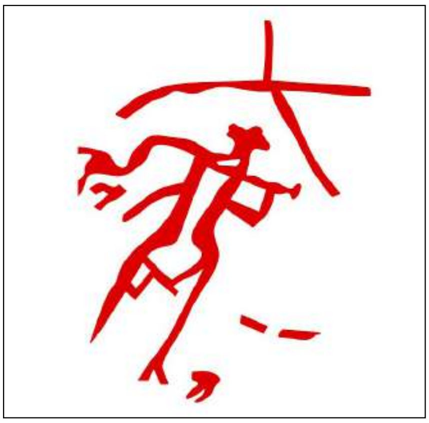


Fig. 4.20.10b Two humans

In this figure, both white and red paintings are seen. The figures are drawn but both were drawn in different time periods. A human figure is drawn in the centre part of the panel in red, but it was faded. A fish figure is drawn below the human in white pigment (Fig. 4.20.11a-4.20.11b).

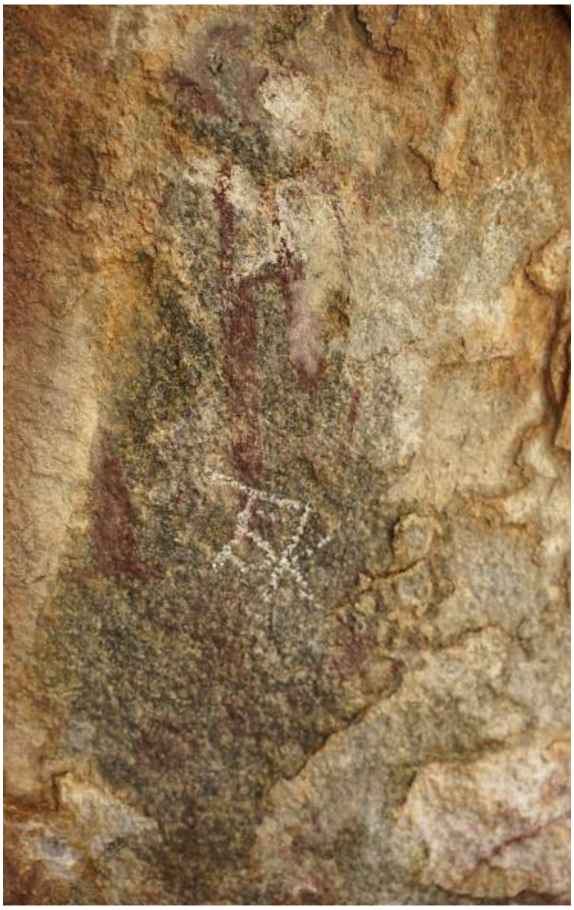


Fig. 4.20.11a Human

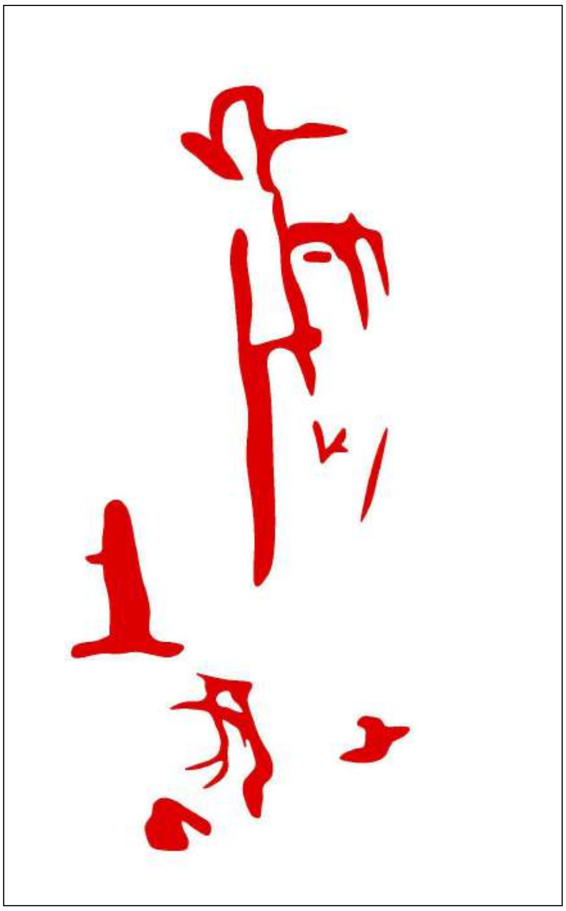


Fig. 4.20.11b Human

One human figure is seen on the right side of the painting holding a long spear. He is in a bent position looking backwards and the spear is facing upwards as though ready to project the spear as a missile. On the opposite side, some images are faded, but two long vertical lines are seen. It is also like two spears but the human holding that spears are in faded condition (Fig. 4.20.12a-4.20.12b).

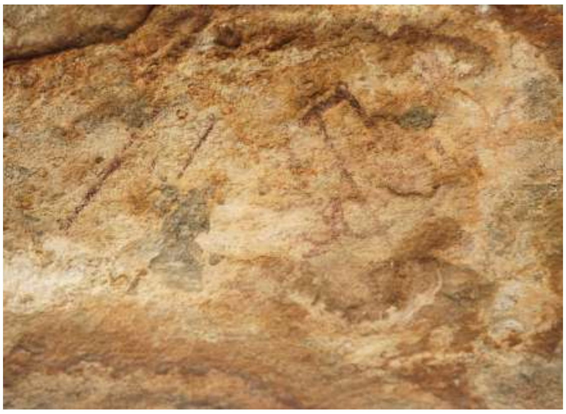


Fig. 4.20.12a Human with spear

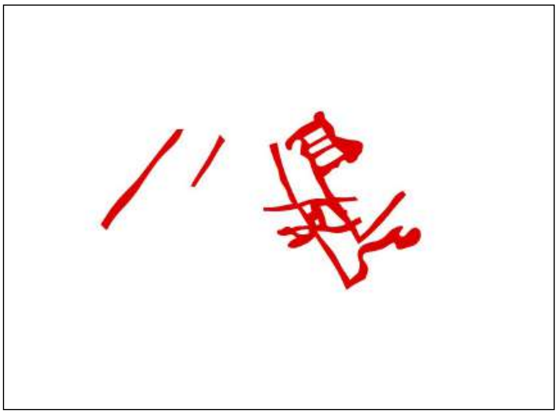


Fig. 4.20.12b Human with spear

A human figure is shown made of red pigment. A man holding a shield in his right hand is defending himself. The shield is drawn square in shape with continuous criss-cross lines all over the square (Fig. 4.20.13a-4.20.13b).

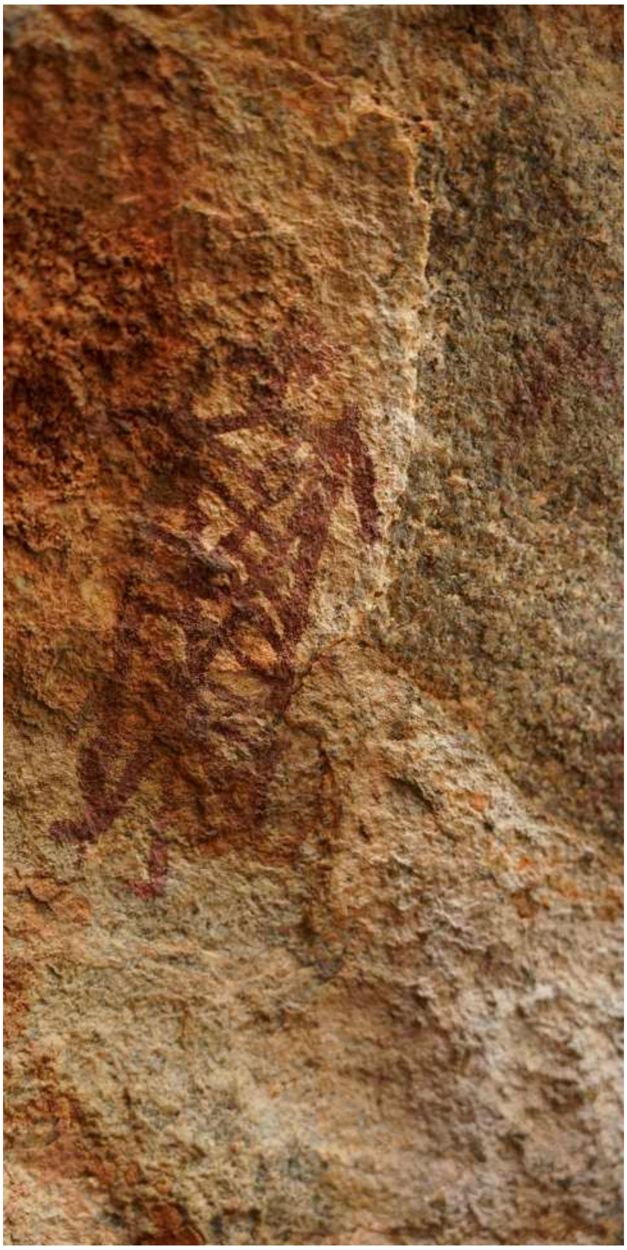


Fig. 4.20.13a Human

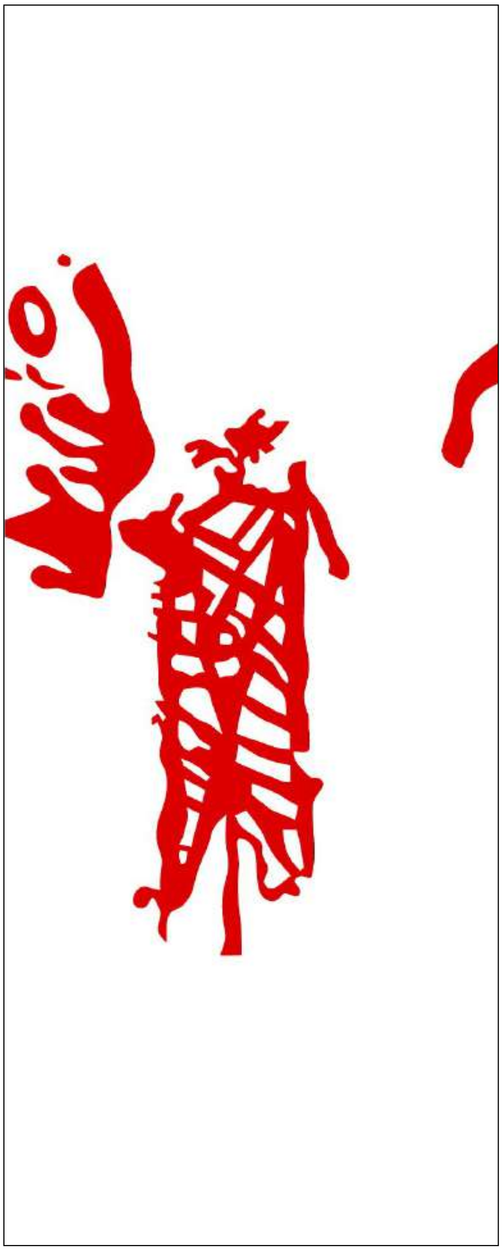


Fig. 4.20.13b Human

The shelter has preserved engravings or petroglyphs of symbols and human with weapons. A trident symbol is shown and the two side prongs are seen at the end, which is like horizontal lines towards the right. Below this, there is a human figure and he is riding over cattle with a trident towards the right and slightly down looks like pointing someone (Fig. 4.20.14a-4.20.14b).

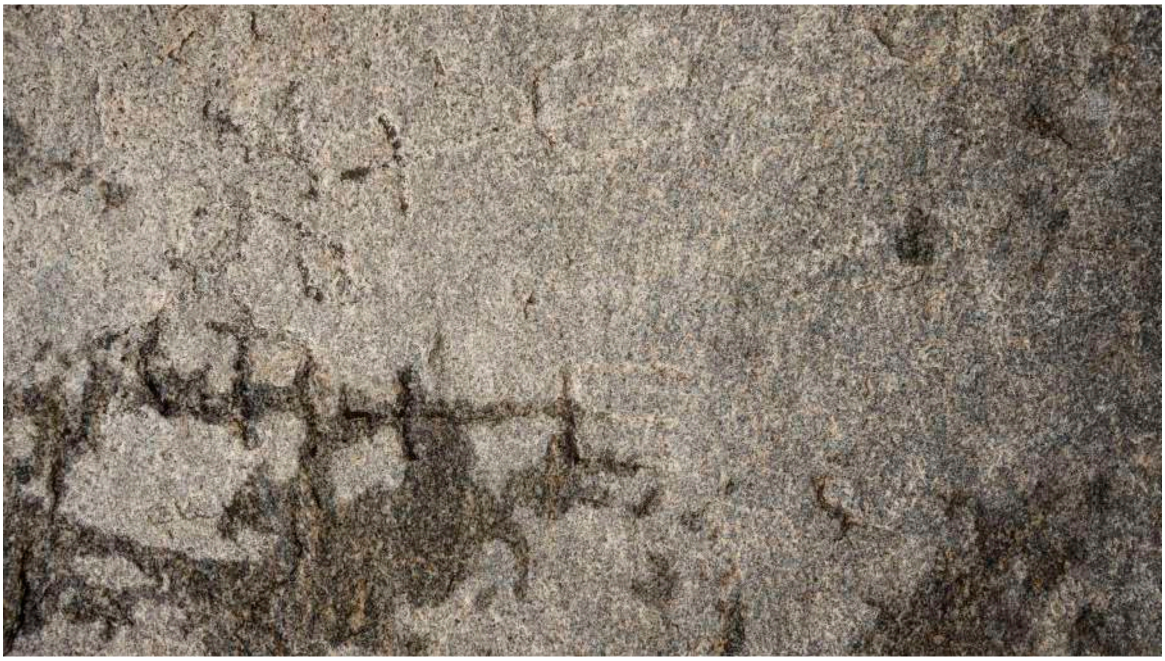


Fig. 4.20.14a Human, animal and trident

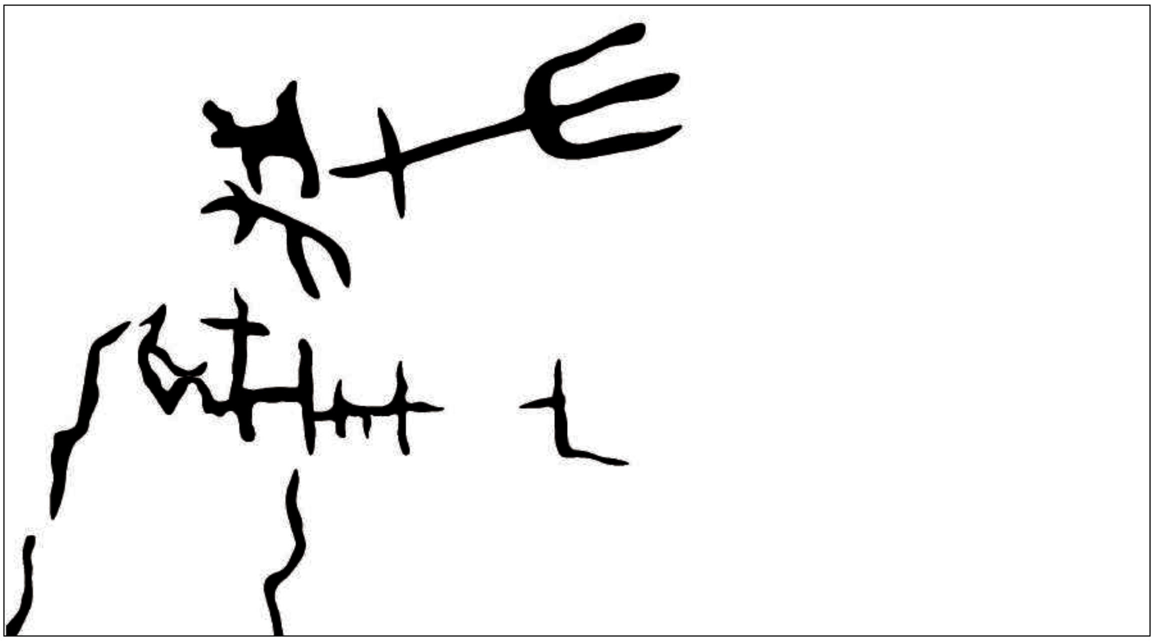
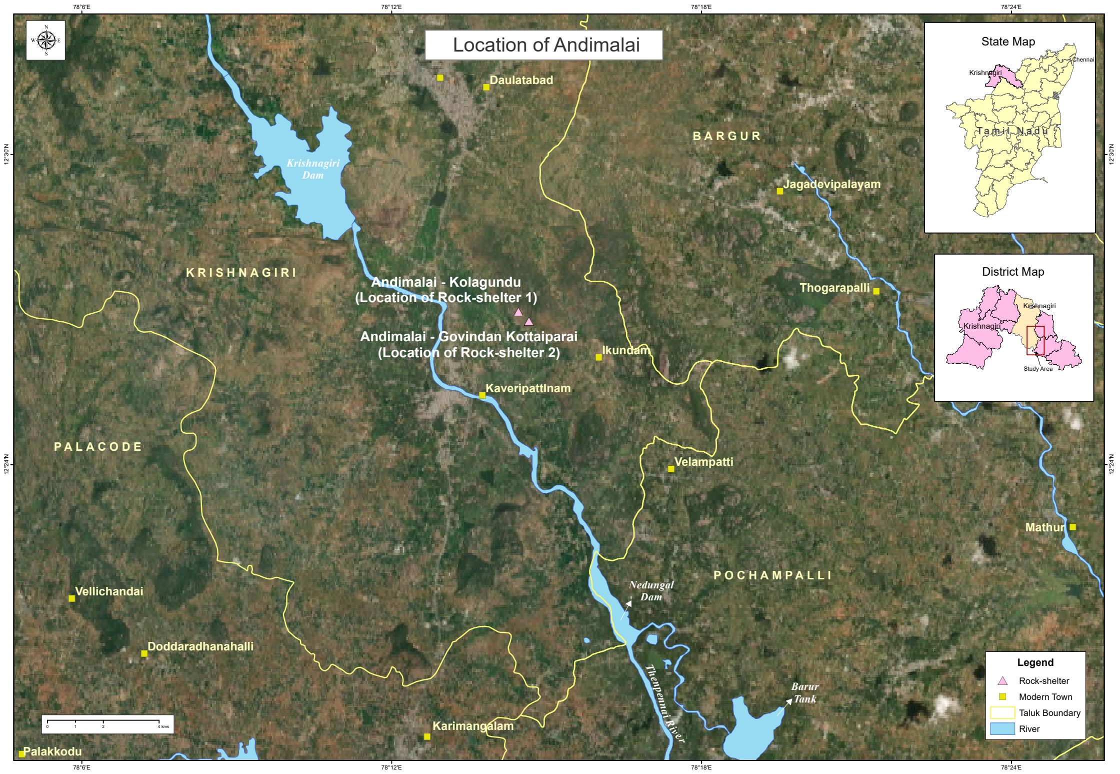


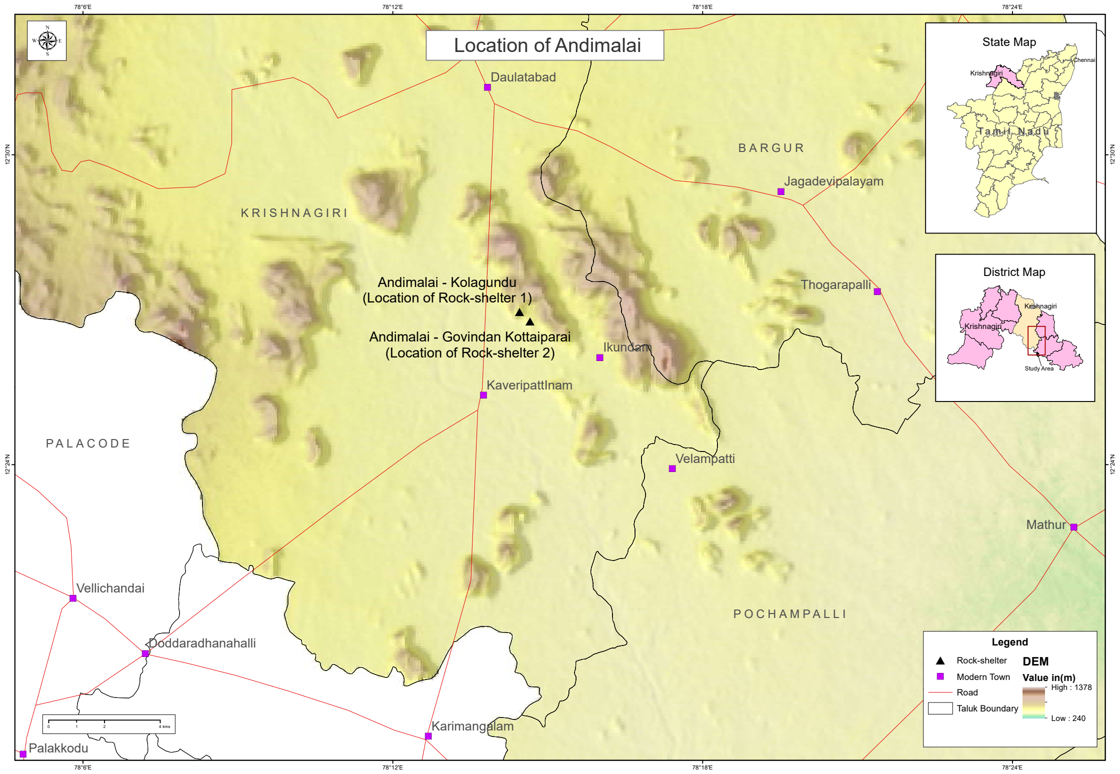
Fig. 4.20.14b Human, animal and trident

4.21. Andimalai

Andimalai (12. 447381 N; 78.24235 E) lies on the Kaveripattinam-Velampatti road at a distance of 6 km to the east of Kaveripattinam and 4 km to the west of Velampatti (Map 4.21.1-4.21.2). About 2 km towards north of the village, a hillock locally called as Andimalai is located. This hill, covered with thick bushes, consists of huge boulders used by our ancestors as rock shelter for dwelling as well as for expressing their thoughts in the form of rock art on its walls and ceilings. The first rock shelter is


78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N
Location of Andimalai
Daulatabad
Krishnagiri Dam
BARGUR
Jagadevipalayam
KRISHNAGIRI
Andimalai - Kolagundu
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Andimalai - Govindan Kottaiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
PALACODE
Velampatti
Mathur
POCHAMPALLI
Nedungal Dam
Vellichandai
Doddaradhanahalli
Barur Tank
Thenpennai River
Karimangalam
Palakkodu
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.21.1 Location of the rock shelter


78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N
Location of Andimalai
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Jagadevipalayam
KRISHNAGIRI
Andimalai - Kolagundu
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Andimalai - Govindan Kottaiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
PALACODE
Velampatti
Mathur
POCHAMPALLI
Vellichandai
Doddaradhanahalli
Karimangalam
Palakkodu
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.21.2 Location of the rock shelter

locally called *Kolagundu* and the second one is located a few meters to the east of the Kolagundu and it is locally called *Govindan Kottaiparai* (Fig. 4.21.1-4.21.2). In front of the rock shelter, there is a shrine of a local deity (Fig. 4.21.3).

Rock shelter - I

The rock shelter measures about 5 m in length and 2 m in width facing north and it is located in the middle of the Andimalai hill, behind the Murugan temple. This rock-shelter has preserved paintings done in white (Kaloin). On the ceiling of this shelter more than 200 abstract symbols are identified, including human figures and birds. The human beings are shown in stick-like manner. The figures of unidentifiable animals, animal figures and peacock, geometrical symbols such as circle, square, rectangular and other symbols are depicted. Apart from these some unidentifiable drawing is also seen. Some figures are in stick form and some are line drawings. Apart from these paintings, other paintings are also visible, but are almost in faded condition which is hard to be recognized.

Rock shelter - II

This rock shelter is located approximately 500m east. The paintings are made out of white pigment. Ten rock art images were noticed on the ceiling of this rock shelter. Four human beings are seen. A man is depicted holding a sickle in his right and other two men are shown standing behind him. Apart from these paintings, a bird and abstract symbols are noticed.

Rock Shelter-III

The total length of the painted surface is about 4 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 4 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 2 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 4 m. The total area of the painted surface is about 3x4 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

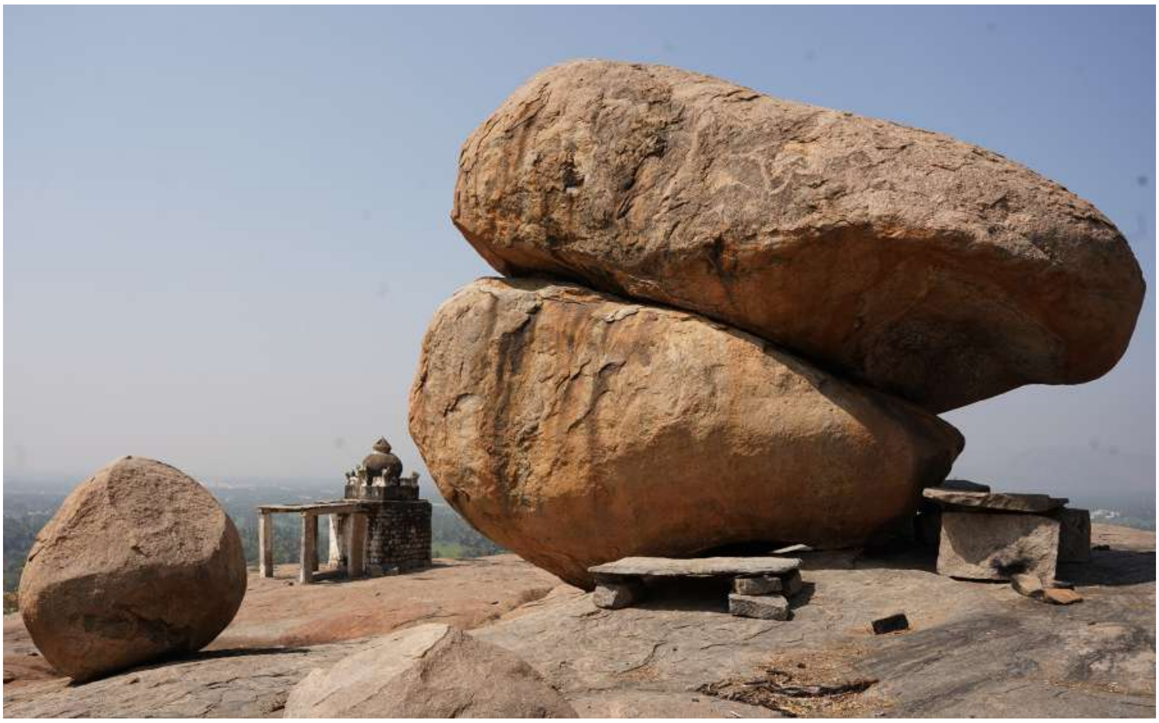


Fig. 4.21.1 General view of the rock shelter

Fig. 4.21.2 General view of the rock shelter

Fig. 4.21.3 Local deity

Description

Shelter I

The rock boulder is located on the hilltop near the Murugan temple and is called as *Malayandan Halli.* This shelter is subject to subsequent visits by the locals due to its proximity to the temple. In this shelter, there are more than a hundred symbols which are all made of white ochre at different time periods. All the figures are drawn as outline drawings. There are human figures in different positions, also birds and animals. Symbols like geometrical patterns and unrecognized figures are found close to each other and at some places, they overlap. At some places square box types were painted and within that dots were placed. Decorative figures were noticed at some places. There are human figures with raised hands, like dance scenes. Some figures were created by people who knew how to draw. Some of the images may have been elaborately painted by devotees visiting the nearby temple.

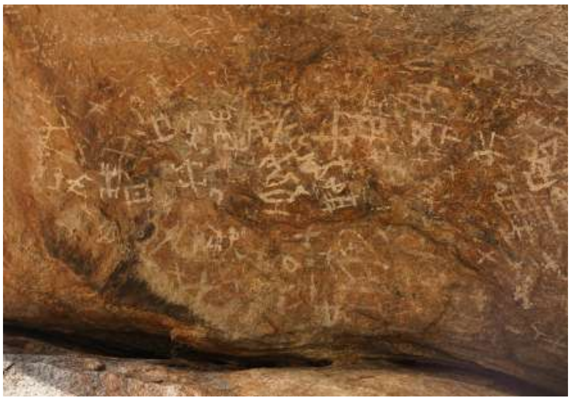
The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of a star, triangle, arrows with single line and double line, cross, wavy pattern inside triangle, square, human with bow and arrow, human and animal riders etc.,

Panel Description

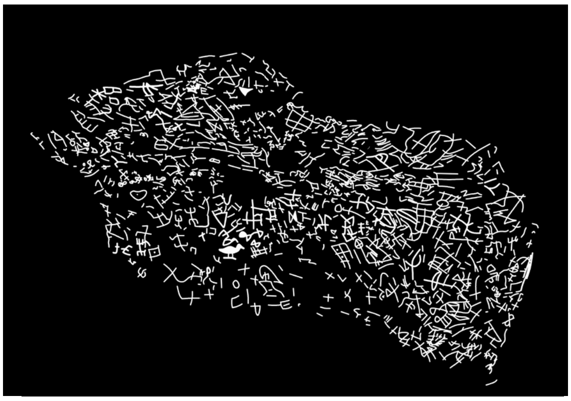
In this panel, fifteen human figures could be identified which are scattered all over the panel. In the middle of the panel, four humans are found in a group, next to this, two bird figures are drawn with their beaks pointing downward, next a triangle with four lines above it is found. Except these, all are abstract symbols. They are identified as star, triangle, arrows with single line and double line, cross, wavy pattern inside triangle, square divided into four parts, square with dot on the centre, fish-like lines, rectangle divided into 6 grids, diamond pattern, three vertical lines with triangle on the top and trident drawn in different angles like vertical, horizontal, and inverted position. An uneven elongated circle was drawn and a long vertical line was drawn in the centre of the circle. A vertical line with a diamond on the top, is seen in this panel (Fig. 4.21.4a-4.21.4b).

Shelter- 2

The second shelter has preserved paintings in white pigment. The paintings are divided into three groups. In the first group on the left side, a man with a bow in his hand is trying to shoot an arrow and he is having an anchor-like head, probably denoting hair in front of him. Some related contexts are painted but they are faded.



▸ *Fig. 4.21.4a Geometric signs*



▸ *Fig. 4.21.4b Geometric signs*

The second group of paintings is on the right side of the shelter. There are three human figures shown in different sizes. The person who is standing first is holding a bow in his left hand and another weapon in his right hand. It seems that they all are involved in a hunting event. Just below this pictograph, a human figure is depicted. Here, the man is holding a weapon in his right hand and is shown in a throwing action. Above the human, a bird is drawn and it seems in a flying position. It is like a hunter trying to throw a weapon like boomerang towards the bird. All the paintings represent hunting related scenes. Even today hunter-gatherer communities like the Irulars live in these regions is noteworthy (Fig. 4.21.5a-4.21.5b).

In this figure (Fig. 4.21.6a-4.21.6b) a symbol, and two human figures are present. A human figure holding a weapon in his right hand and a raised left hand and above

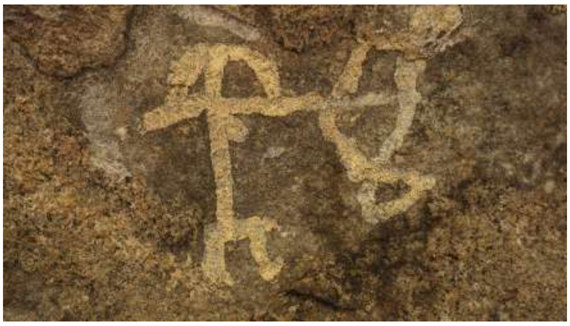


Fig. 4.21.5a Human with bow and arrow

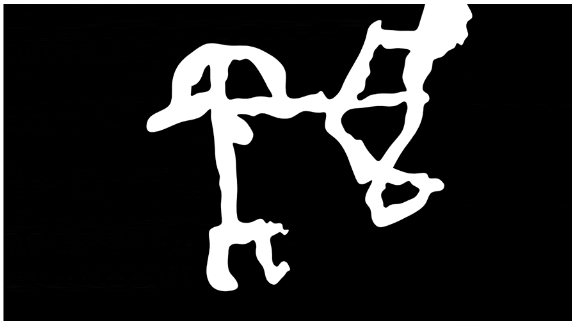


Fig. 4.21.5b Human with bow and arrow

this a bird is depicted. This figure clearly differentiates the body, hands and legs of the animal figurine by thickness and bends and the eyes, beak and neck of the bird are shown perfectly by curves and shades. Below the human figurine, another human figure in linear pattern is drawn. The centre line of trident was not straight might be symbolize something (Fig. 4.21.6a-4.21.6b).

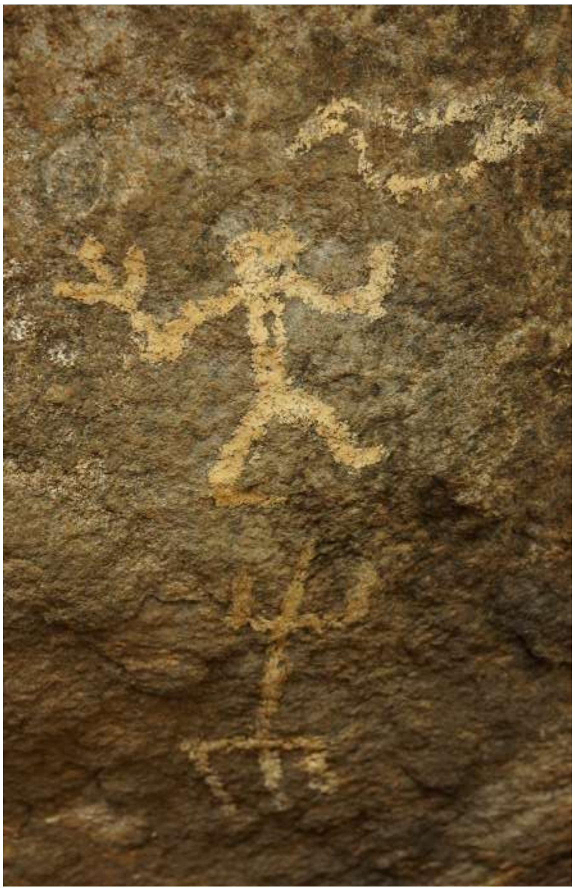


Fig. 4.21.6a Humans and bird

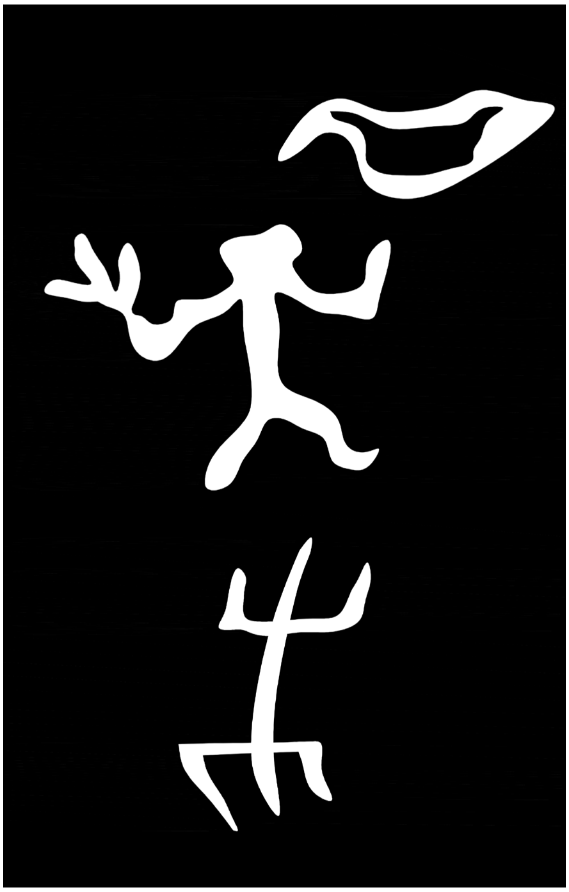


Fig. 4.21.6b Humans and bird

Two double-edged tridents of big and small sizes were drawn on one side by white pigment and the drawings are faded. A four-sided trident was drawn on other side which is clear and this trident was drawn by curvy lines (Fig. 4.21.7a-4.21.7b).

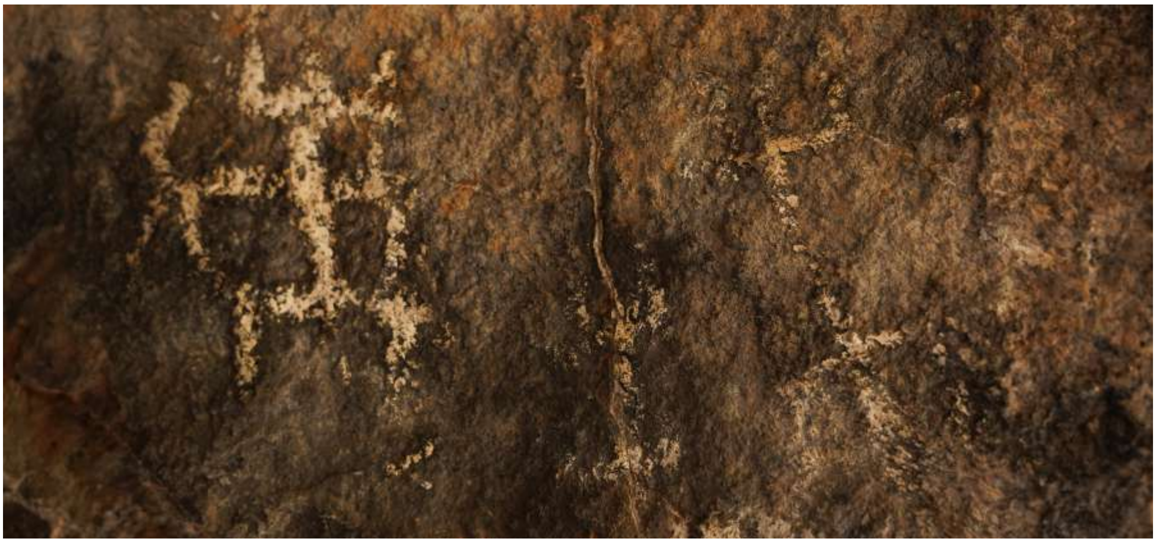


Fig. 4.21.7a Human and animal raiding

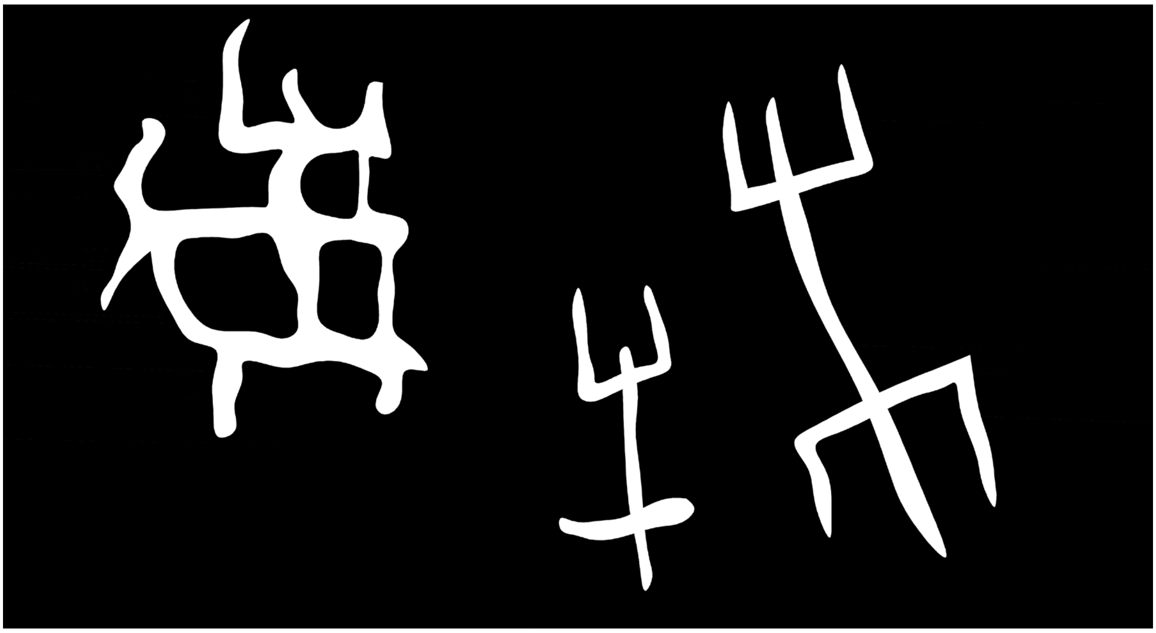
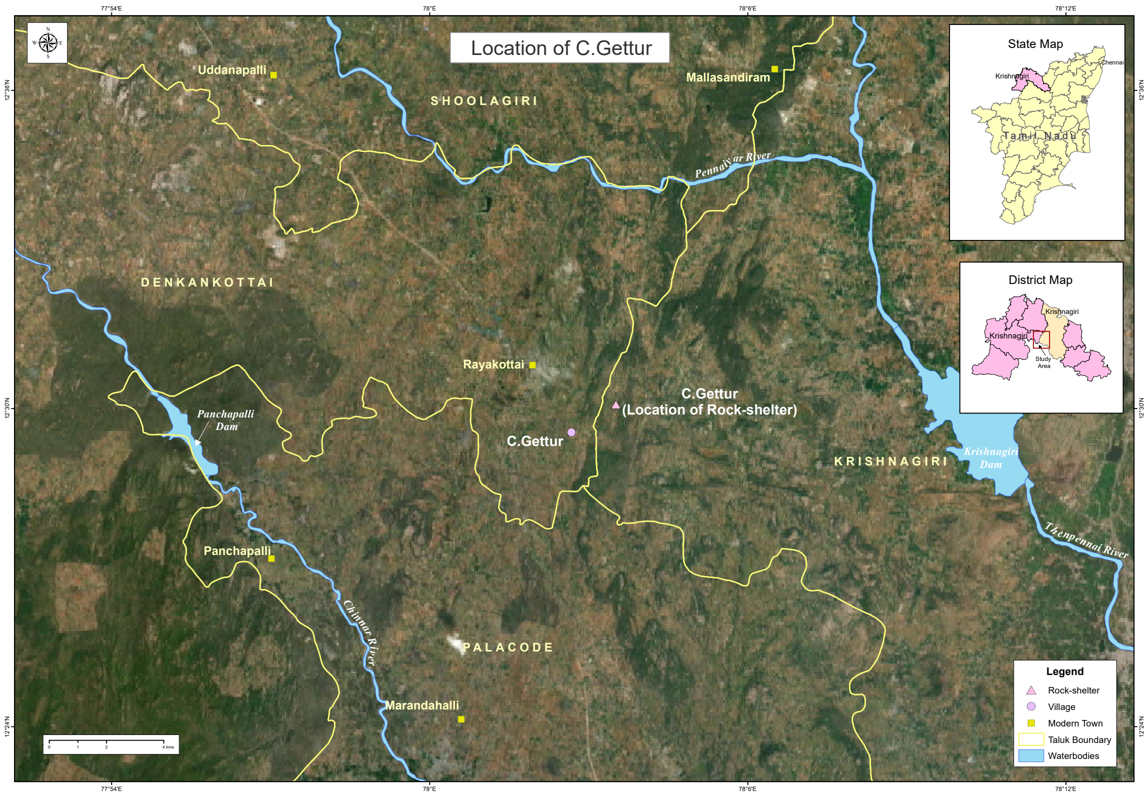


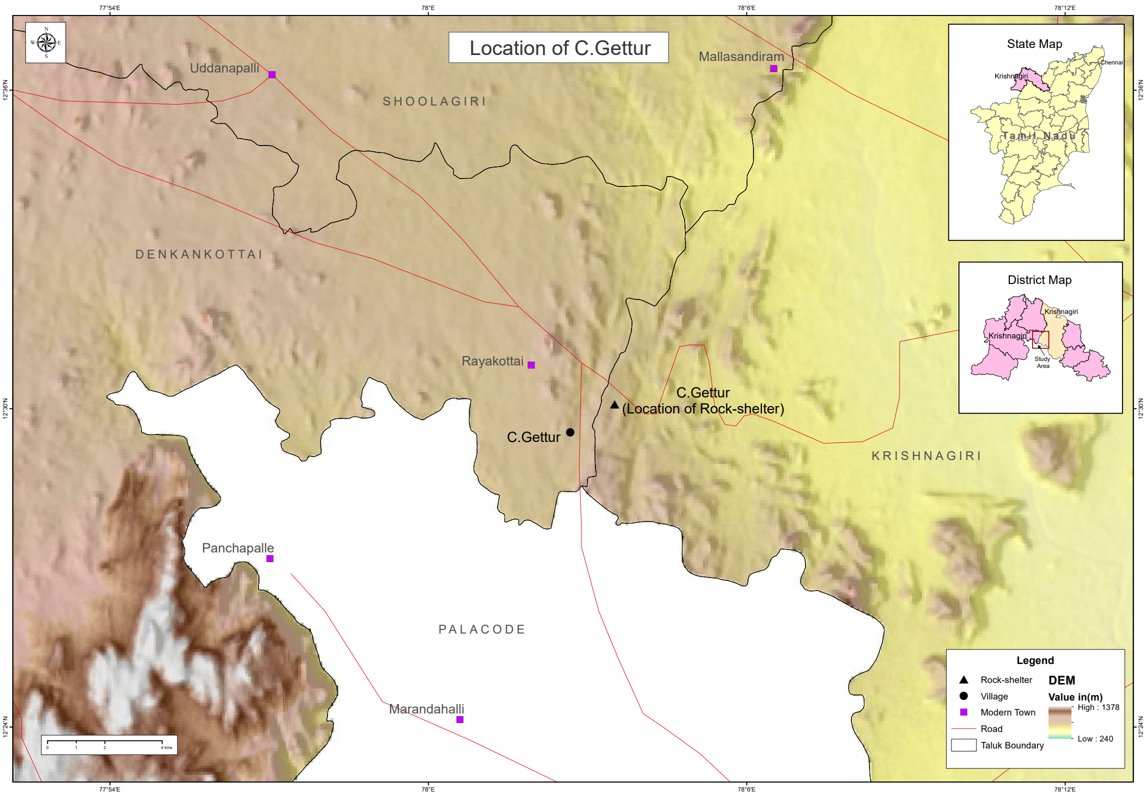
Fig. 4.21.7b Human and animal raiding

4.22. C.Gettur

C.Gettur, a small village, (12.50130 N; 78.05854 E) is located at a distance of 20 km to the south-west of Krishnagiri and 2 km to the east of Rayakottai-Krishnagiri road (Map 4.22.1-4.22.2). The hill locally called Terinjiermalai is located 1 km to the east of the village, it contains several natural rock-shelters and caverns. South of the hill, a huge cave is noticed which contains the paintings on the wall and its ceiling. This rock-shelter has preserved a painting which is made of red ochre and white pigment. Figures of peacocks, human, horse, a wheel or *chakra* and a few geometric and non-geometric patterns are noticed. Most of the paintings are in faded condition (Fig. 4.22.1-4.22.3).


Location of C.Gettur
Uddanapalli
Mallasandiram
SHOOLAGIRI
Pennaiyar River
DENKANKOTTAI
Rayakottai
C.Gettur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
C.Gettur
Panchapalli Dam
KRISHNAGIRI
Krishnagiri Dam
Thenpennai River
Panchapalli
Chinnar River
PALACODE
Marandahalli
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Krishnagiri
Chennai
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
77°54'E
78°E
78°6'E
78°12'E
12°36'N
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.22.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of C.Gettur
Uddanapalli
Mallasandiram
SHOOLAGIRI
DENKANKOTTAI
Rayakottai
C.Gettur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
C.Gettur
KRISHNAGIRI
Panchapalle
PALACODE
Marandahalli
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Krishnagiri
Chennai
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
77°54'E
78°E
78°6'E
78°12'E
12°36'N
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.22.2 Location of the rock shelter

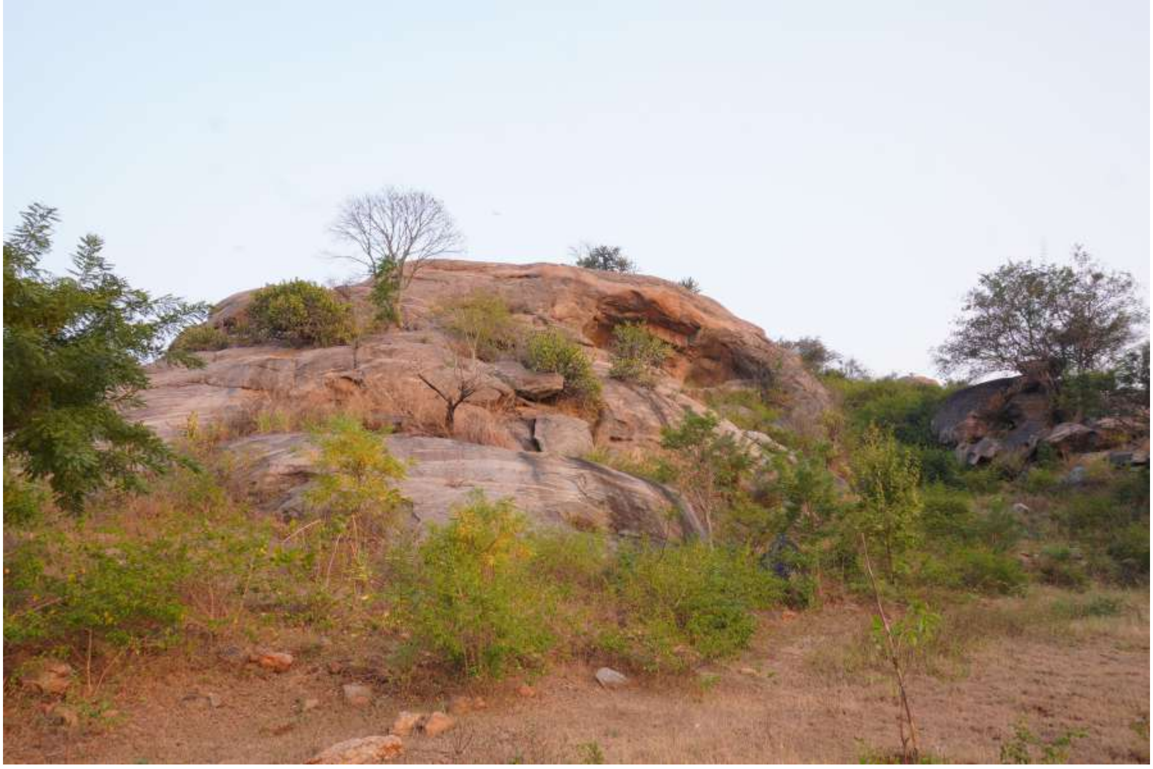


Fig. 4.22.1 General view of the rock shelter

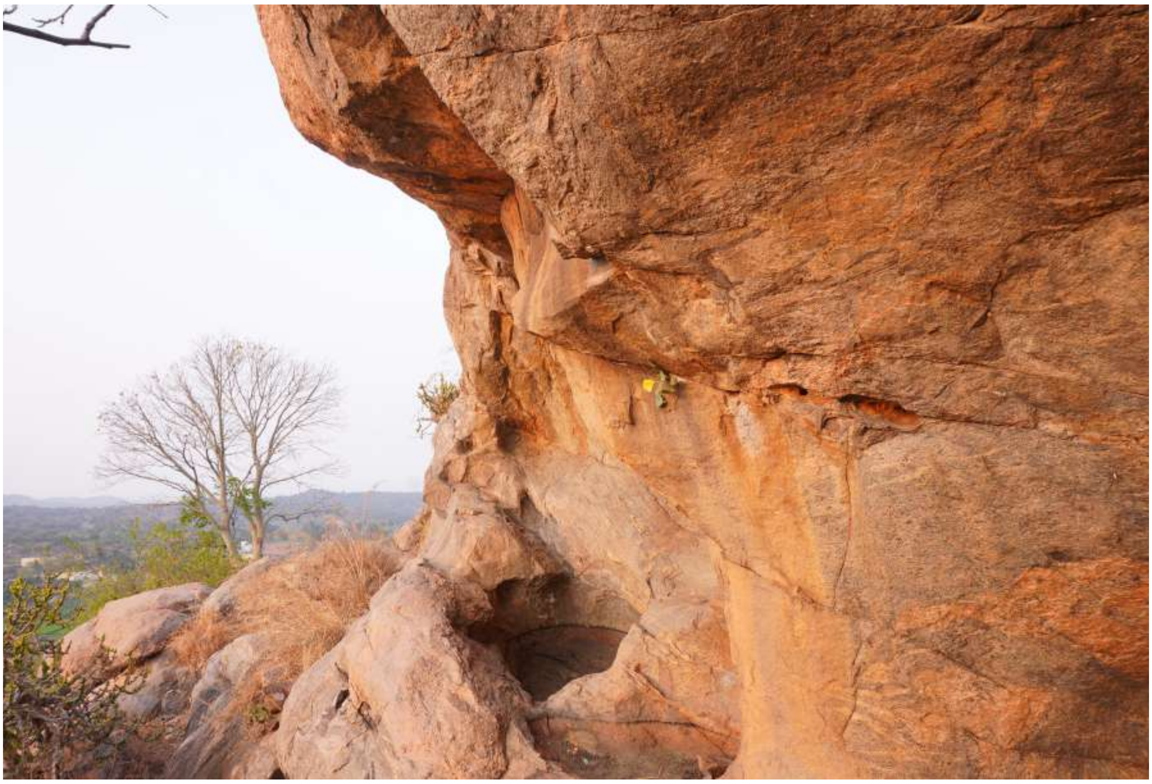


Fig. 4.22.2 General view of the rock shelter

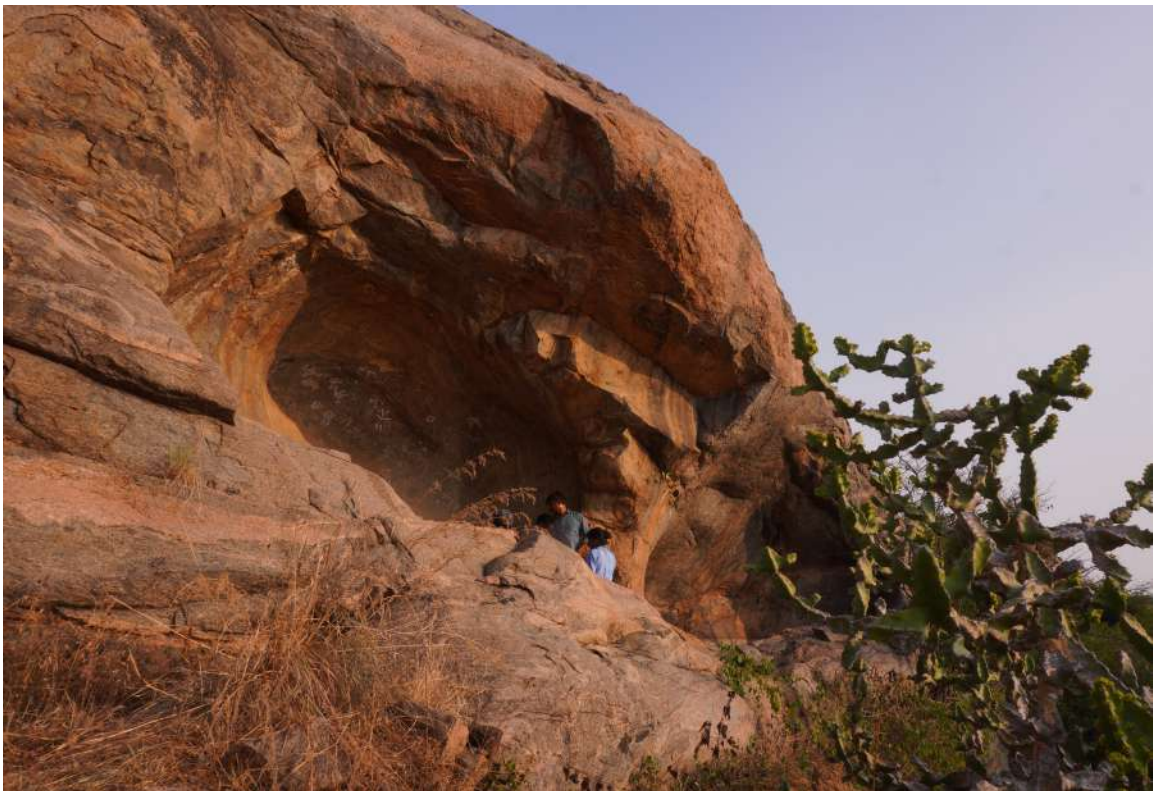


Fig. 4.22.3 General view of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 5.80 m, the total length of the rock shelter is about 6 m and the height of the inclined surface is about 4.60 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 6 m. The total area of the painted surface is 3.30x2 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

The panel depicts human figures, animal and bird figures and abstract symbols of geometric shape.

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of fauna, flora, trident, human raiding, birds, house-like sign, hunter raiding etc., could be seen in the C.Gettur paintings.

Panel Description

As aforesaid paintings made of white pigment, depict figures and abstract symbols. Some depictions are not clear due to their faded condition. The figures depicted include human, animal and bird figures, the abstract symbols that are of geometric type.

Across the entire panel, two animal figures are found, one at the middle of the panel which depicts the animal with a man seated on it and another man near to this animal in a feeding posture. Another animal is also found with a man seated on it, near to this, an abstract symbol is found which has a single horizontal line and three vertical lines merging one from the middle and two from either corner of the horizontal line, the same

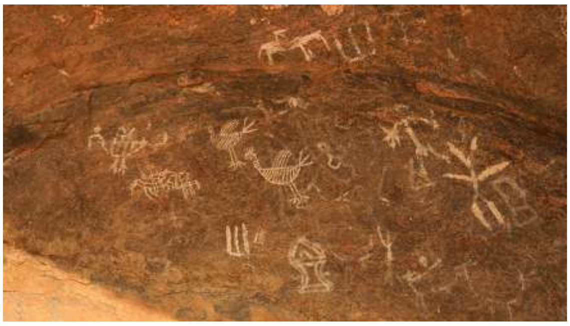


Fig. 4.22.4a Fauna, flora, Trident and human raiding

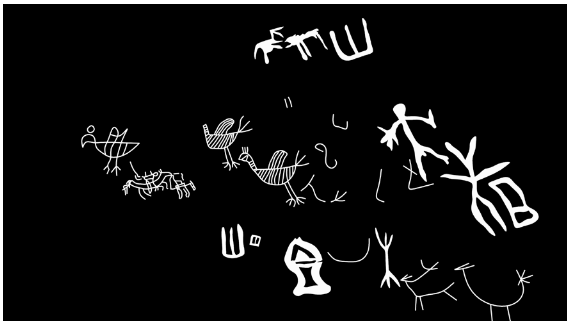


Fig. 4.22.4b Fauna, flora, trident and human raiding

abstract symbol was found at the bottom of this panel. Near to this, another abstract symbol which possibly resembles a lamp was painted, 6 bird figures are painted, the body and feathers of the birds are filled with strokes of slanting lines. Three human figurines are painted with hands and legs outstretched. Two lamp shaped abstract symbols were found and 8 other abstract symbols with geometrical patterns are painted (Fig. 4.22.4a-4.22.4b).

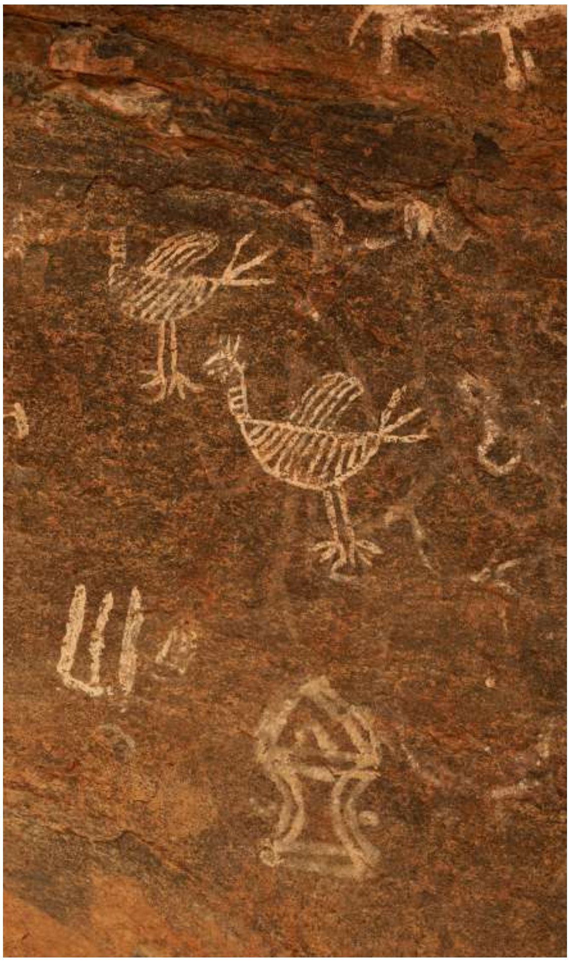


Fig. 4.22.5a Birds, trident and house like sign

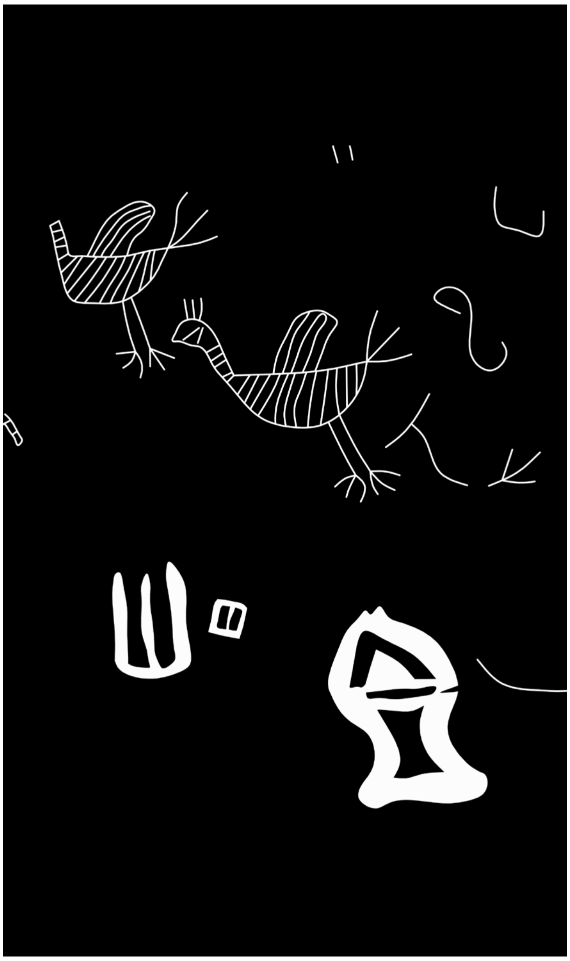


Fig. 4.22.5b Birds, trident and house like sign

This panel has a depiction of two birds (peahen?) with wings and legs. The head

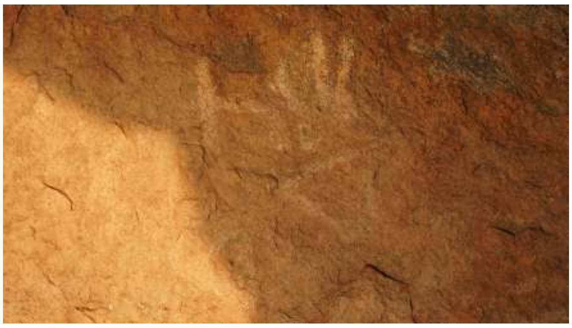


Fig. 4.22.6a Trident

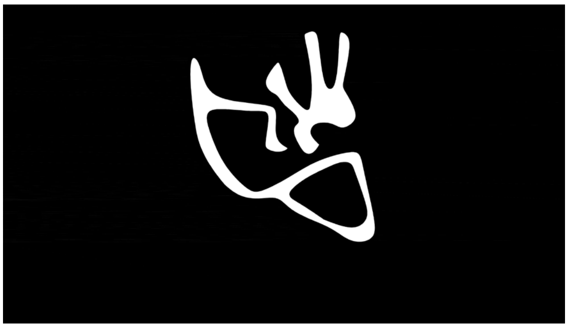


Fig. 4.22.6b Trident

is more visible. The body and wings are filled with a simple line of white pigment. The tail is short, legs are drawn with straight line with three fingers. Below these, two symbols were drawn, the first one could be a trident (Fig. 4.22.5a-4.22.5b).

Symbols are depicted in white pigment. Three lines are at the top and the geometric shapes of drawings are below the lines. (Fig. 4.22.6a-4.22.6b).

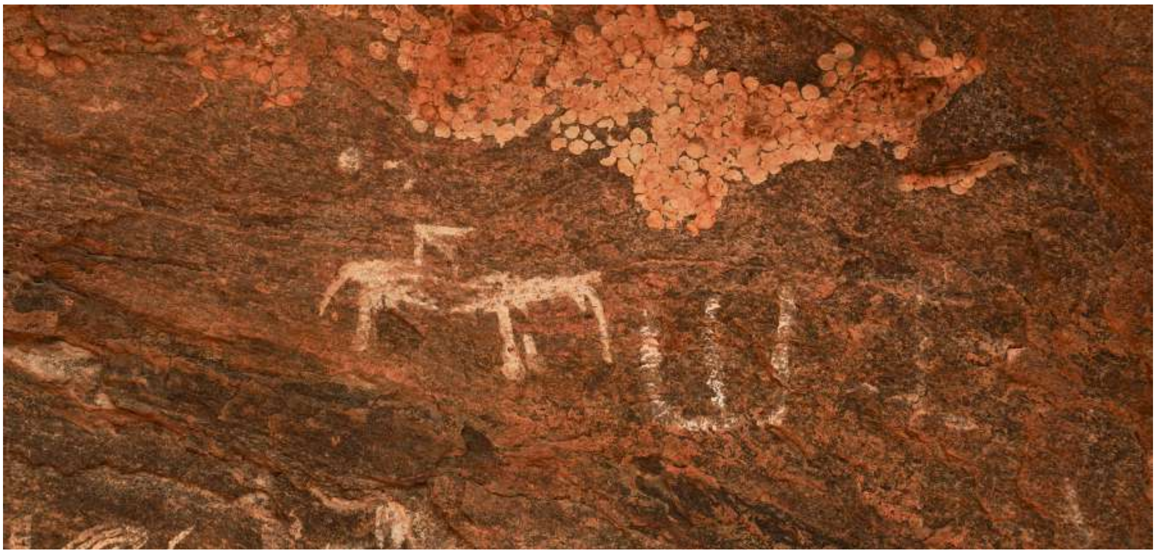


Fig. 4.22.7a Hunter raiding with trident

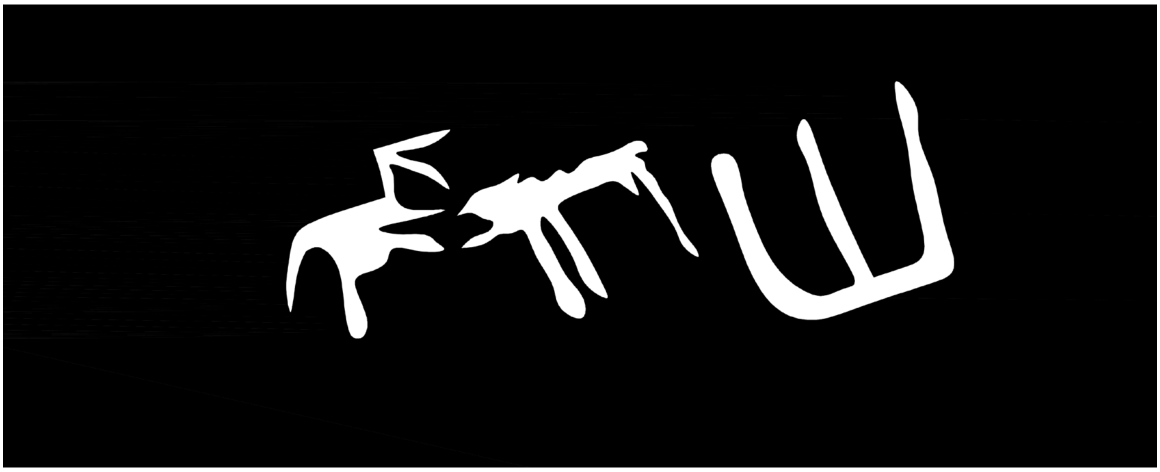


Fig. 4.22.7b Hunter raiding with trident

In this panel, a human figure riding a horse is depicted. The human figure is not much clear but the animal figure has four legs and with a tail. The trident kind of symbol is drawn. The colour of the paint is white (Fig. 4.22.7a-4.22.7b).

Human figures are drawn in this panel with animals. At the bottom, two humans are fighting, one is sitting on a horse by holding a weapon and another one is without a weapon and a animal. Above it, two human figures are drawn in white with a thick stroke line. One human figure with a round shape, hands with fingers and two legs. Another one, the head portion is not clear, may be lines were used to show a head along with hands and legs (Fig. 4.22.8a-4.22.8b).

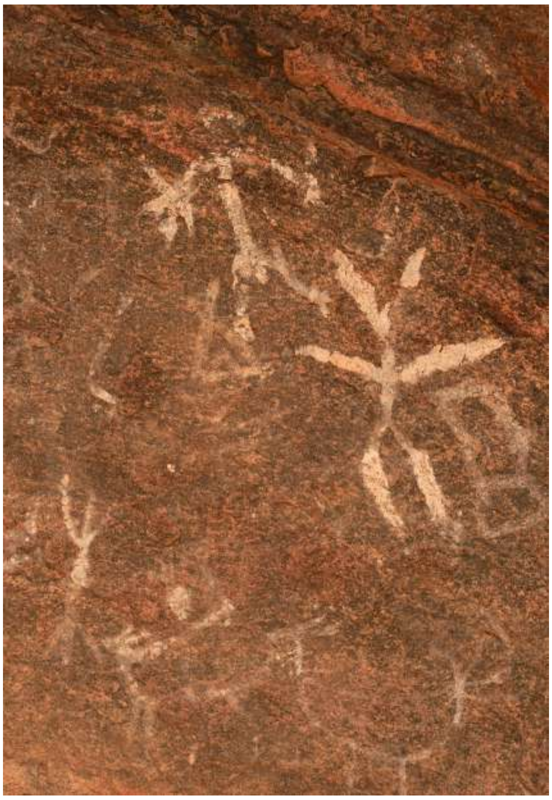


Fig. 4.22.8a Humans fighting scene

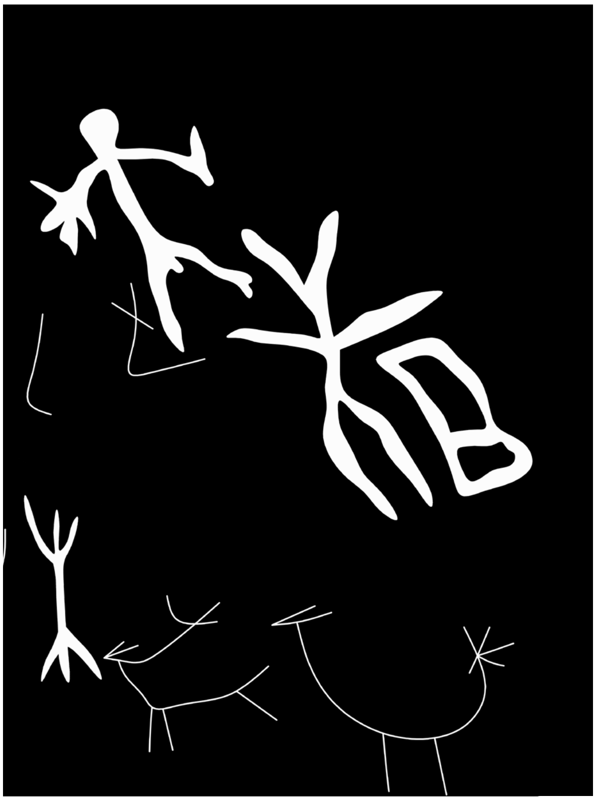


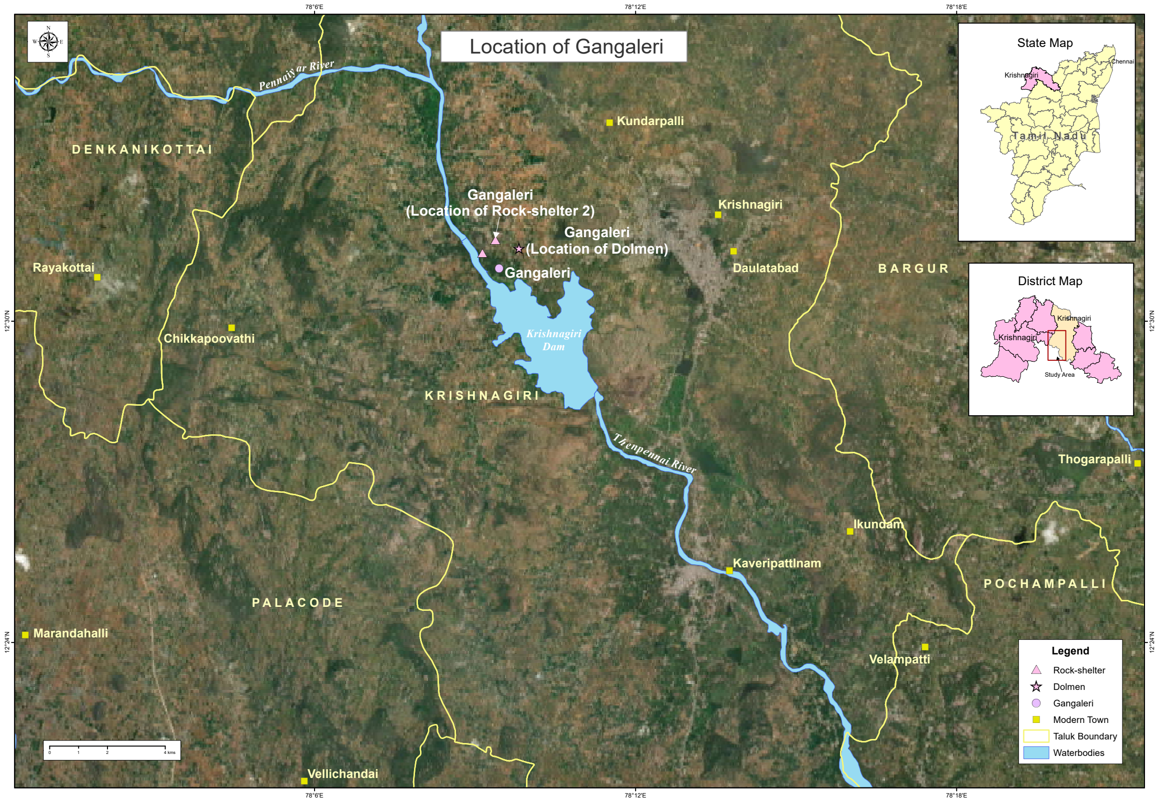
Fig. 4.22.8b Humans fighting scene

4.23. Gangaleri

The Gangaleri (12.51656 N; 78.15765 E) village lies at a distance of 5 km to the south-west of Krishnagiri and 1 km to the south of the Krishnagiri-Rayakottai main road (Map 4.23.1-4.23.2). There are two hills locally called *Thambiranguddai*, *Thenmalai* or *Enimalai* near the village. Two paintings are noticed on the rock shelter and one on the dolmen (Fig. 4.23.1; 4.23.2).

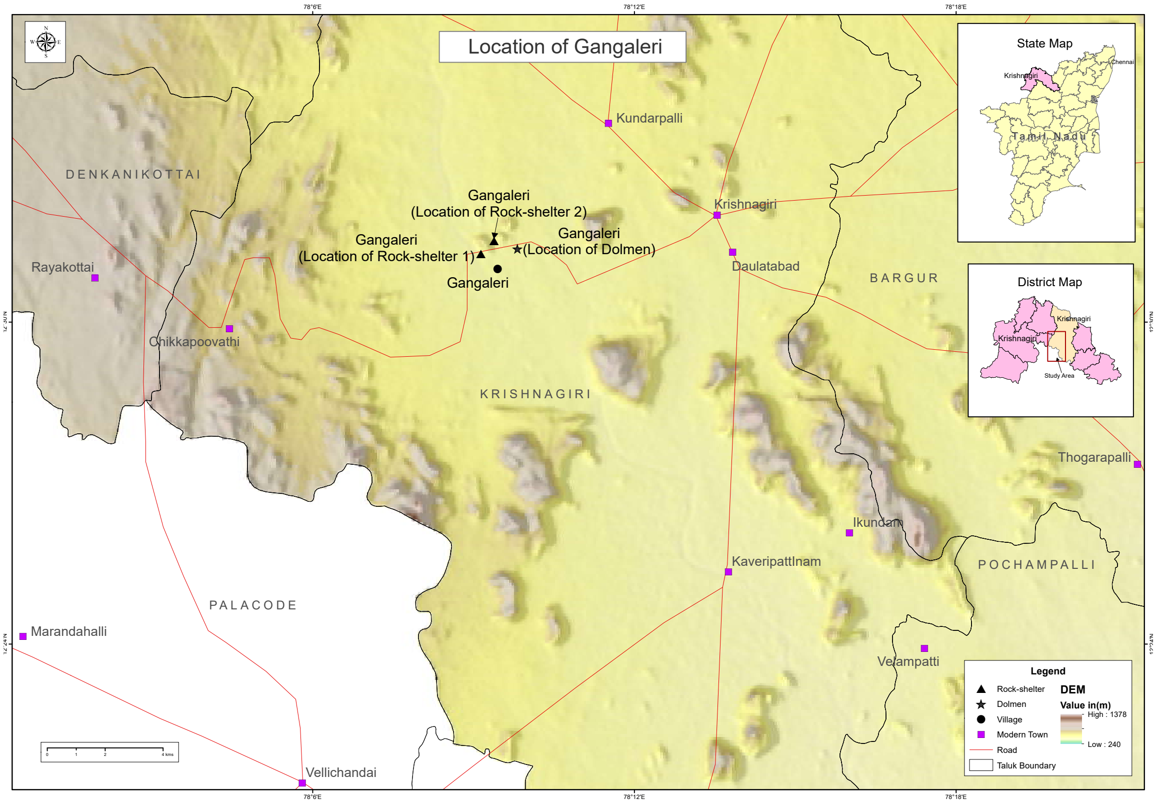
Rock Shelter-I

The rock shelter is located 1 km to the west of the village and on the southern side of the Thambiranguddai, behind the Selliamman temple. The river Pennaiyar flows 0.5 km to the south of this rock shelter. The rock-shelter is facing the southern side, where the paintings are on the ceilings of the shelter. This rock shelter measures 4 m in length, 3 m in width and 1m in height. There are a few geometrical symbols like the square, circle. Few abstract patterns were noticed.



Location of Gangaleri
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
12°30'N
12°24'N
Pennaiyar River
DENKANIKOTTAI
Kundarpalli
Krishnagiri
Gangaleri
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Gangaleri
(Location of Dolmen)
Gangaleri
Rayakottai
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Chikkapoovathi
Krishnagiri Dam
KRISHNAGIRI
Thenpennai River
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
POCHAMPALLI
PALACODE
Marandahalli
Velampatti
Vellichandai
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Dolmen
Gangaleri
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies

Map 4.23.1 Location of the rock shelter



Location of Gangaleri
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
12°30'N
12°24'N
DENKANIKOTTAI
Kundarpalli
Krishnagiri
Gangaleri
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Gangaleri
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Gangaleri
(Location of Dolmen)
Gangaleri
Rayakottai
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Chikkapoovathi
KRISHNAGIRI
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
POCHAMPALLI
PALACODE
Marandahalli
Velampatti
Vellichandai
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Dolmen
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.23.2 Location of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter-II

The second rock shelter is located 0.8 km to the north of the first rock shelter and to the north-west of the village. This shelter is located on the southern side of the hill. The hill is locally called *Enimalai* or *Thenmalai* and the shelter is facing south. This shelter measures 4 m in length and 10 m in height. There are more than five paintings in white. Representations of three females were shown seated on an unidentifiable animal. Behind this, another human figure is shown in a standing posture with two hands stretched. A human figure with decoration is depicted. Abstract symbols are noticed in a geometric pattern. A few paintings are in faded conditions which are hard to recognize.

Dolmen paintings

The third painting is located 1 km to the north of this village and 0.5 km to the east of *Enimalai*. There is a huge dolmen in the cultivated field and the dolmen measures 5.20x2.70x1.40 m. The paintings are in white. The paintings were found on the north and western orthostat of the dolmen. There are a few geometrical symbols like the square and circle.

Rock Shelter

The length of the painted surface is about 5.80 m, the length of the rock shelter is about 6 m and the height of the inclined surface is 3.15 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 4 m. The area of the painted surface is about 2.20x1.20m. Another rock shelter next to the dolmen measures 5 m and the painted area covers an area of 4.60x1.60cm.

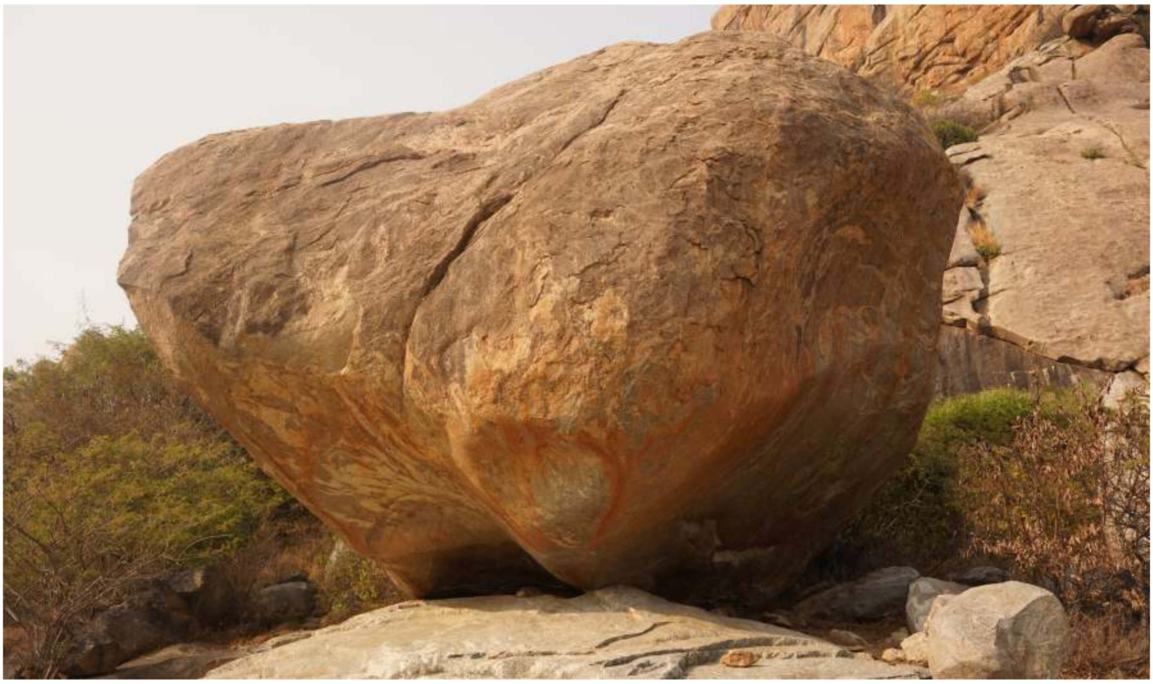


Fig. 4.23.1 General view of the rock shelter

Description

Shelter 1

The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of infinity sign, U shaped, zig zag pattern, fish like sign, geometrical shape, damaru, human, monkey, arrow like signs, two inverted triangular human figures, square and cross lines, bird-like figure, unidentified symbols and recent Tamil writings are found on the rock surface. This painting must have been created by different people at different time periods.

Shelter 2

The rock shelter is having few human figures in white pigment and appears to be deity figures (similar to clay sculpture).

Dolmen

The dolmen has a few paintings in white. It is like a human figure, a square with cross lines, some symbols represent mountains and some straight and cross lines. These paintings are faded and not clearly visible. All these paintings may have been created by different people. Dolmens must have been constructed earlier and paintings might belong to a later period.

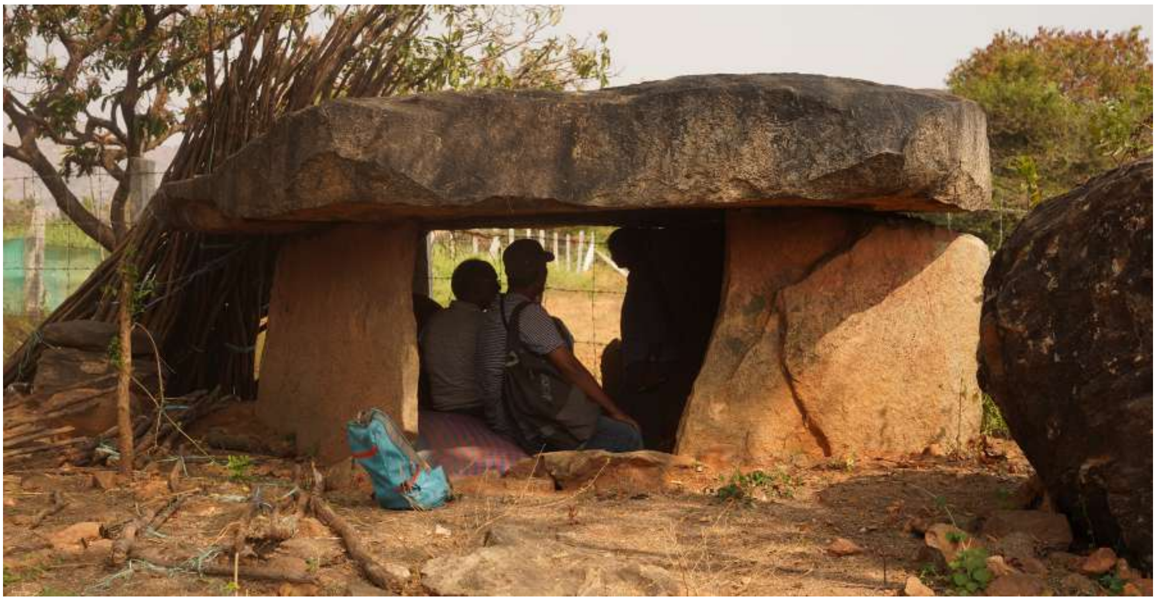


Fig. 4.23.2 General view of the dolmen

Panel Description

Shelter-1

This abstract symbol is drawn with white pigment, it looks like an infinity symbol and it could be a sign. It draws in a horizontal manner (Fig. 4.23.3a-4.23.3b).

This painting is in curved from right to left and is done with white pigments. This painting is in a faded condition (Fig. 4.23.4a-4.23.4b).

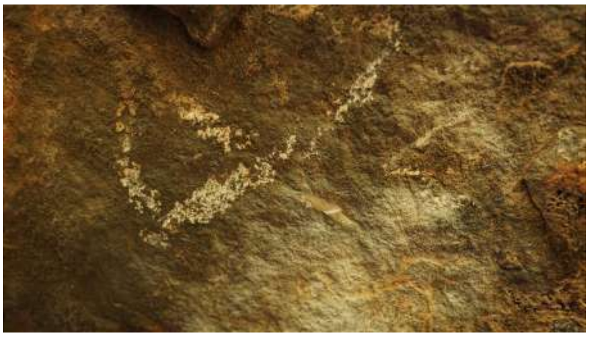


Fig. 4.23.3a Infinity symbol

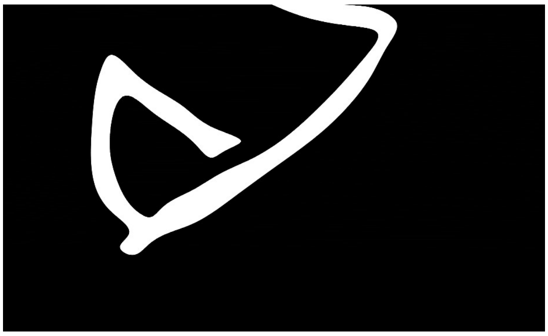


Fig. 4.23.3b Infinity symbol

This painting has two geometrical shaped symbols of which one painting is very clear. The first one is drawn with a straight vertical line with crossing of horizontal lines at the bottom and as well as at the top portion, the lines move in an upward direction. The second one, is a square shape geometric symbol with two lines in a vertical and horizontal manner making a box inside. These paintings are made with white pigments (Fig. 4.23.5a-4.23.5b).

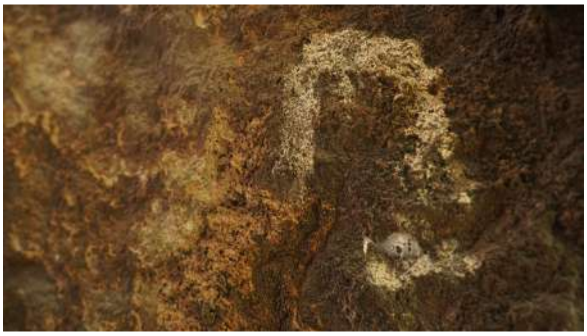


Fig. 4.23.4a "U" shaped sign

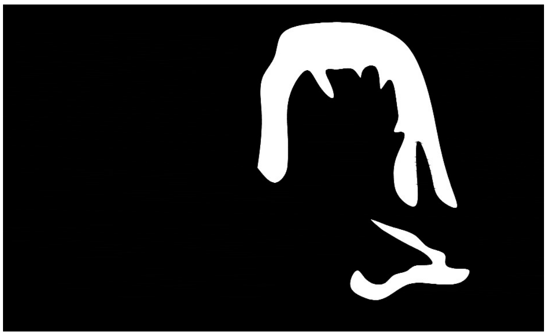


Fig. 4.23.4b "U" shaped sign

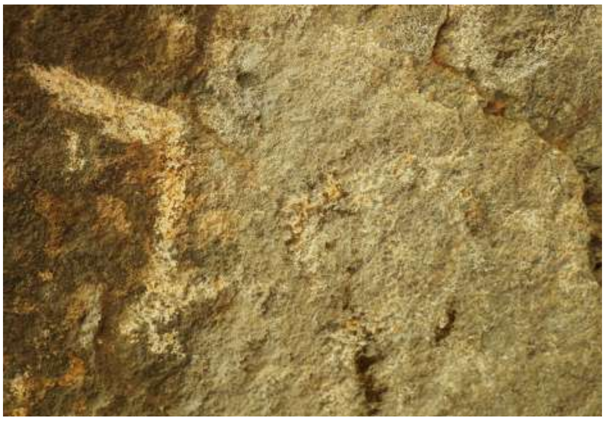


Fig. 4.23.5a Zigzag pattern

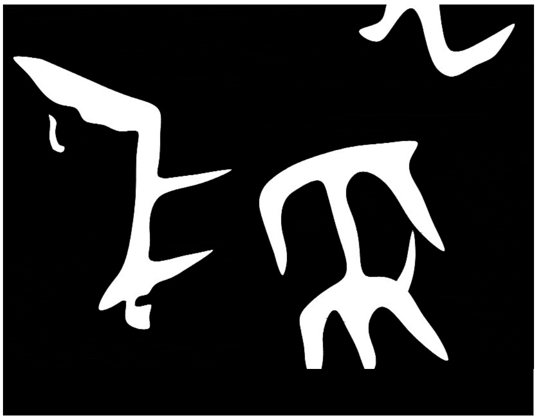


Fig. 4.23.5b Zigzag pattern

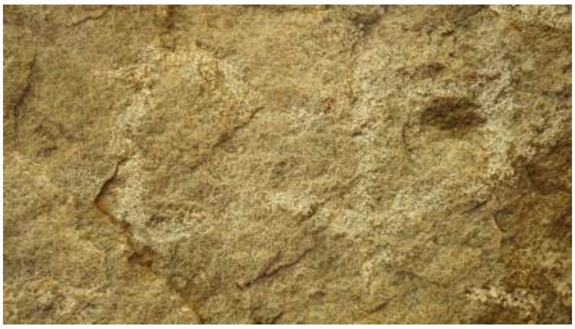


Fig. 4.23.6a Fish like sign

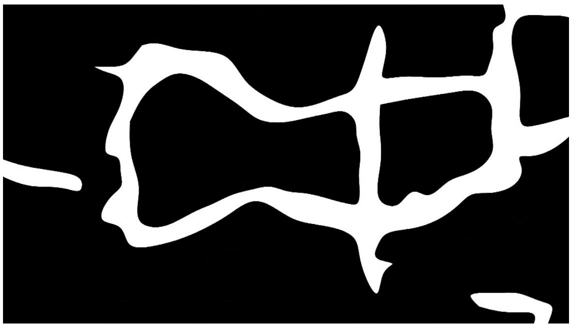


Fig. 4.23.6b Fish like sign

Two abstract symbols in white colour are evident here. The first one is a curve open towards the right and the top end extends as a small horizontal line, next to this a fish-like symbol facing upwards. The symbols are not clearly visible (Fig. 4.23.6a-4.23.6b).

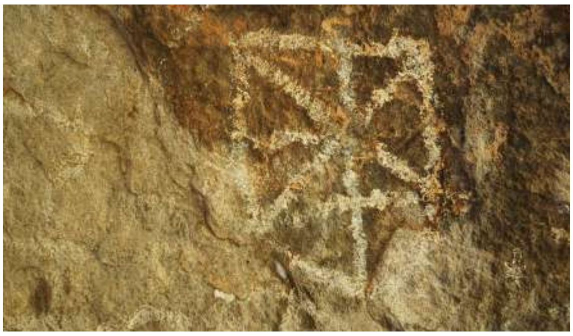


Fig. 4.23.7a Geometrical design

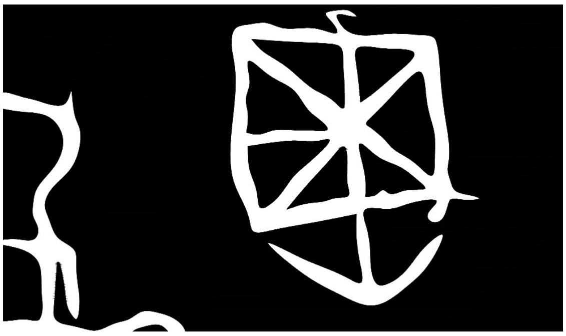


Fig. 4.23.7b Geometrical design

Square shaped abstract symbol is drawn with white pigment. Four lines were drawn in vertical, cross and horizontal positions. All these lines meet at centre of a square and it divides it into tringles. (Fig. 4.23.7a-4.23.7b).

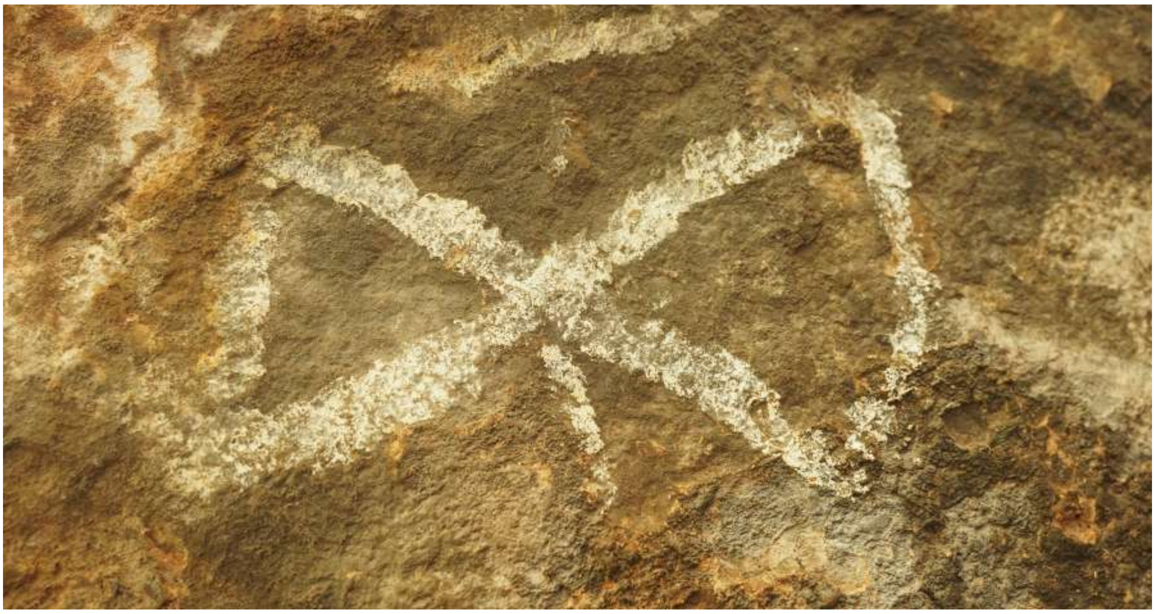
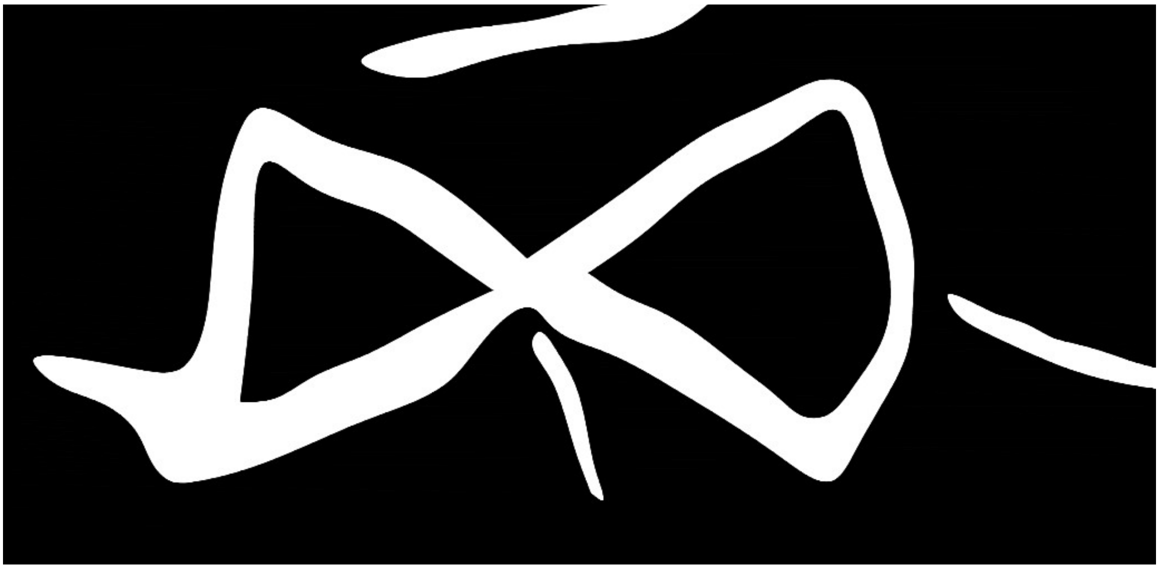
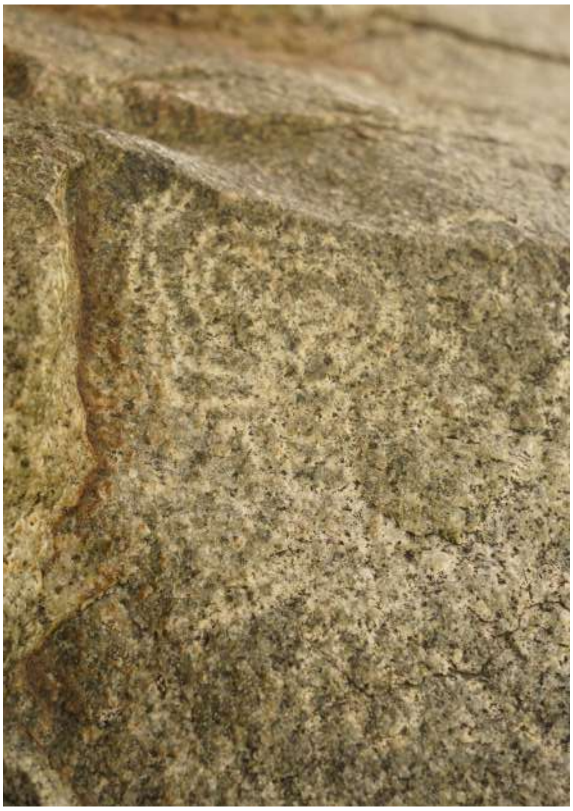


Fig. 4.23.8a "Damaru"

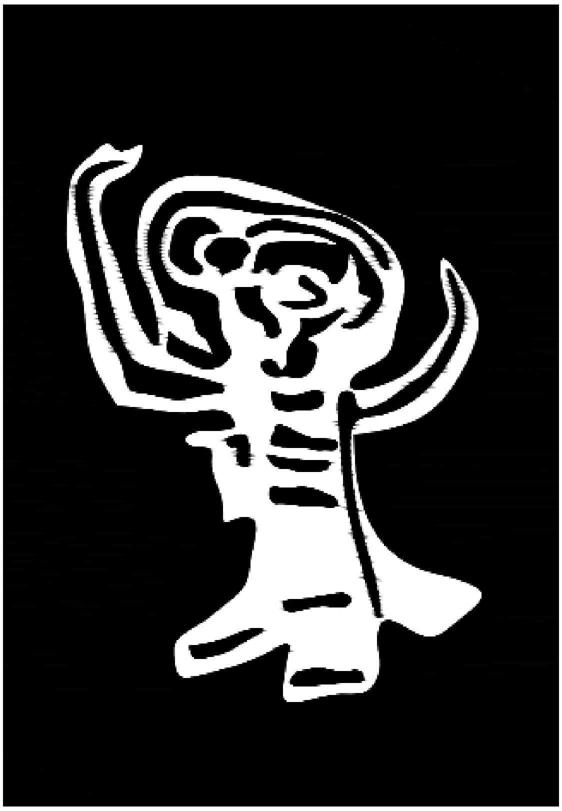


▸ *Fig. 4.23.8b "Damaru"*

This is an abstract symbol/sign that looks like a *Damaru* in shape, drawn with thick lines. A small vertical line at the centre of the sign extends downwards. Some lines are, are faded. The paintings are executed in white (Fig. 4.23.8a-4.23.8b).



▸ *Fig. 4.23.9a Monkey*



▸ *Fig. 4.23.9b Monkey*

This figure is drawn by etching, which looks like a monkey. This figure is made with thin and curved lines. The head is round in shape filled with concentric lines inside. The right hand raised up is visible and the legs are not clearly visible. The tail is also stretched up and it extends over the head (Fig. 4.23.9a-4.23.9b).

Shelter - 2

A human figure is depicted. The drawing is made by linear lines with the hands and legs outstretched. The head portion is in crescent shape, and the neck is slightly bent/ tilted towards the left. The hands are raised up holding some object (weapon?) in both hands. This possibly indicates ritual activity. This human figure is larger in size with a maximum height of 30cm (Fig. 4.23.10a-4.23.10b).

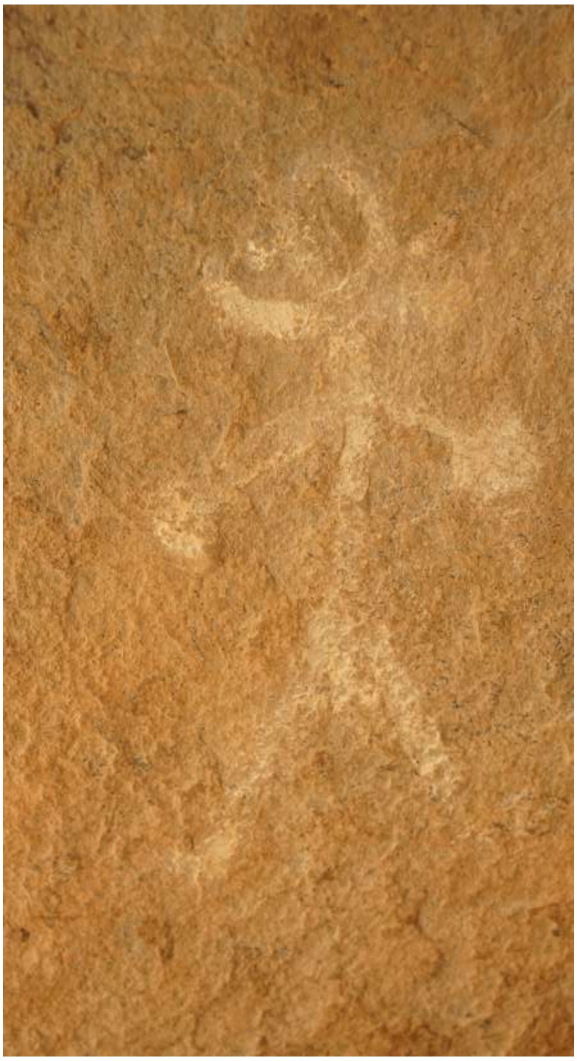


Fig. 4.23.10a Human figure

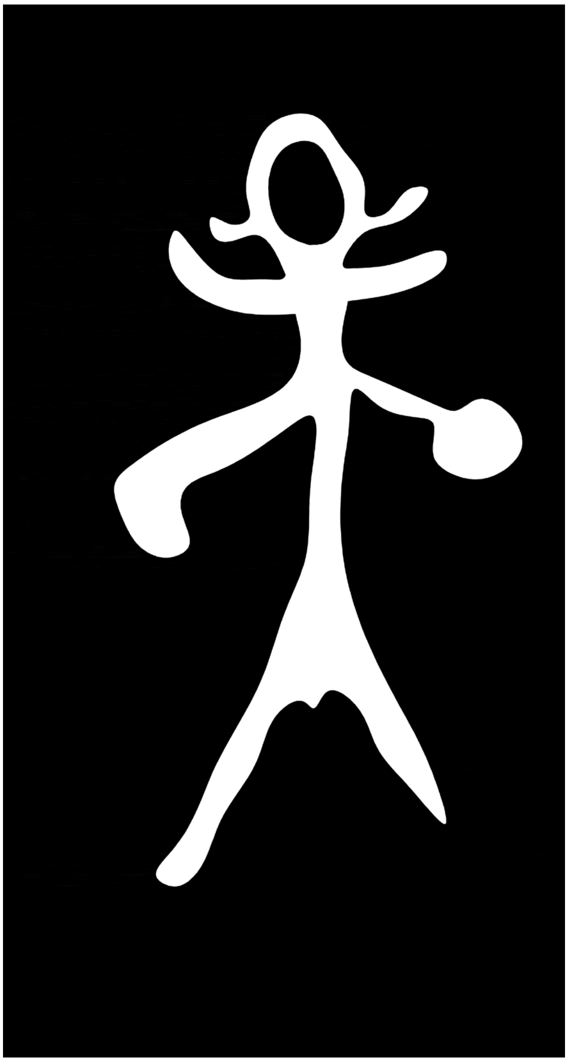


Fig. 4.23.10b Human figure

In this drawing, three human figures and an abstract symbol are found. Some lines are faded and the symbol drawn at the top represents a house or vehicle. It has four lines at the bottom, like legs or supportive poles, above this some perpendicular lines are drawn which look like the roof or body of the vehicle. Three vertical lines and two horizontal lines are found over it. Below this symbol, three human figures which look like a child or female figures. Two figures, one big and one small in size are noticed. In the first two images, the face is circular or round, eyes, nose and *bindi* are differentiated clearly and a half circle or conical symbol are drawn on the head and two curvy lines are drawn on the left and right side of the face like ear ornament or braid. The third

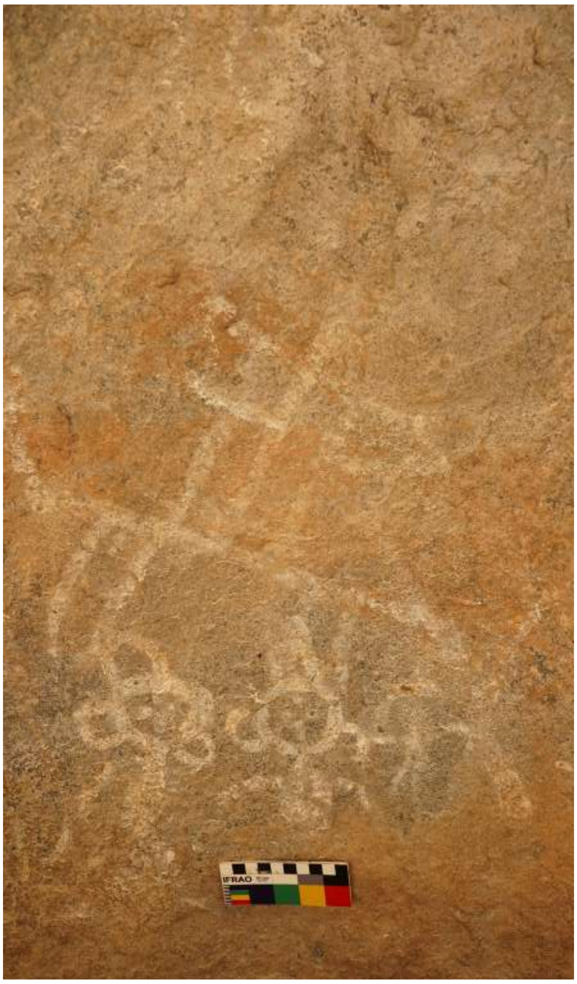


Fig. 4.23.11a Human figures

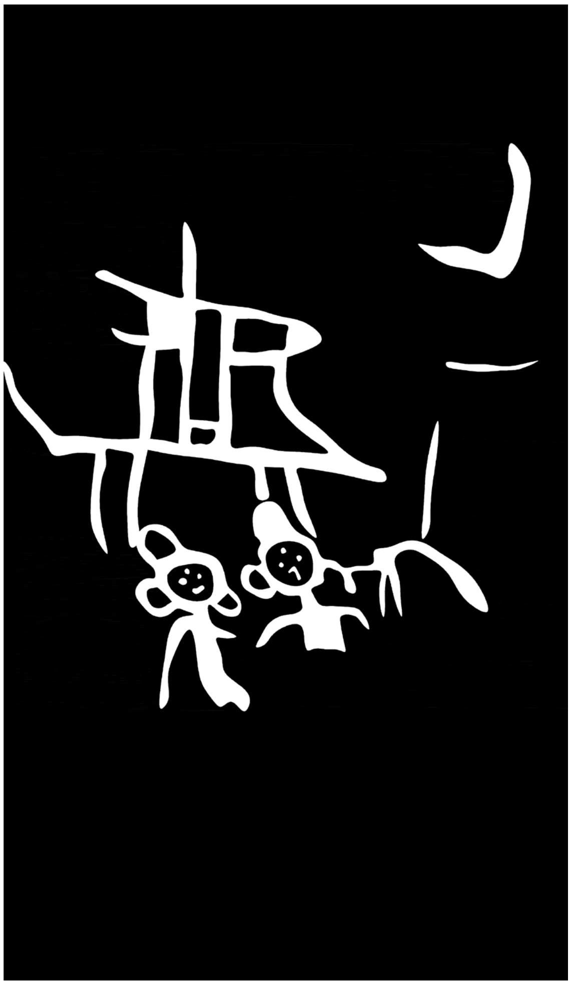


Fig. 4.23.11b Human figures

figure has outstretched legs and hands. This all resembles a dancing scene. In the first two figures, their right leg was in front like stepping forward (Fig. 4.23.11a-4.23.11b).

Dolmen

Geometric lines are drawn with two baseless triangles in white pigment. It resembles mountains or birds. The symbol had the maximum height of 10 cm (Fig. 4.23.12a-4.23.12b).

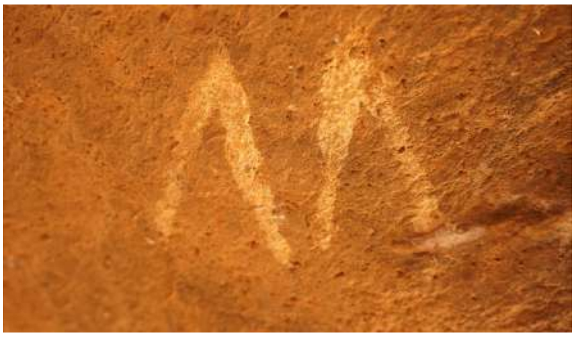


Fig. 4.23.12a Arrow like sign

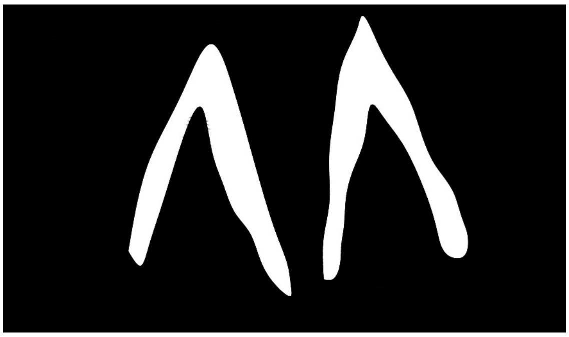


Fig. 4.23.12b Arrow like sign

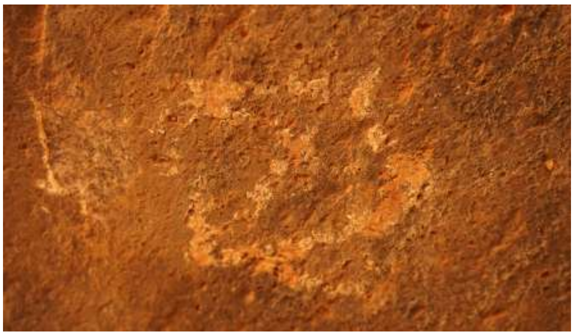


Fig. 4.23.13a Unidentified sign

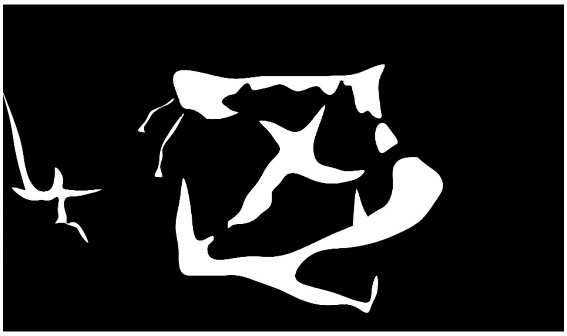


Fig. 4.23.13b Unidentified sign

This abstract symbol is drawn with white pigment. Unclear about the content, due to its faded condition(Fig. 4.23.13a-4.23.13b).

This geometric symbol/sign is drawn with a thick line of white pigment. Two lines drawn at cross angle form a triangular shape. The lines meet at the centre of this symbol. The symbol had a minimum height of 5cm (Fig. 4.23.14a-4.23.14b).

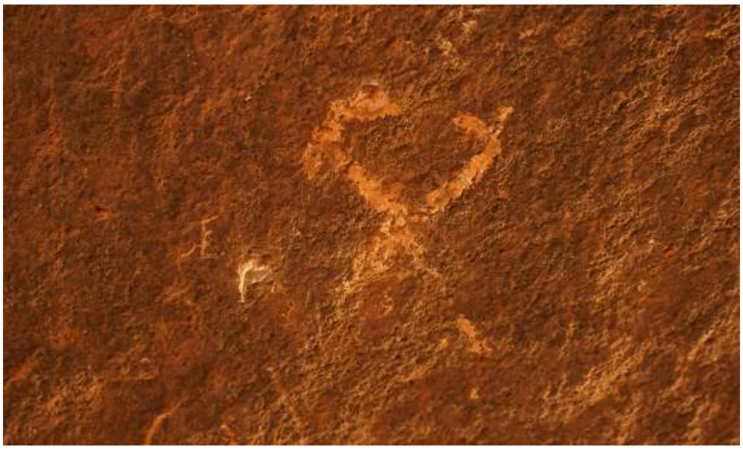


Fig. 4.23.14a "Damaru" like sign

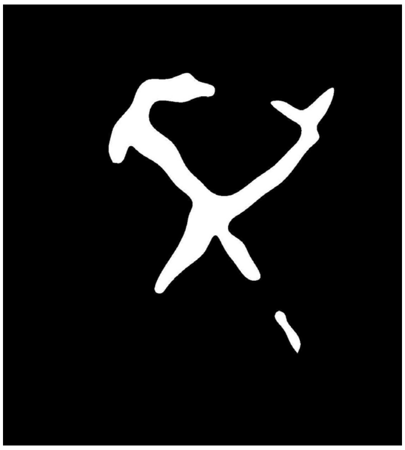


Fig. 4.23.14b "Damaru" like sign

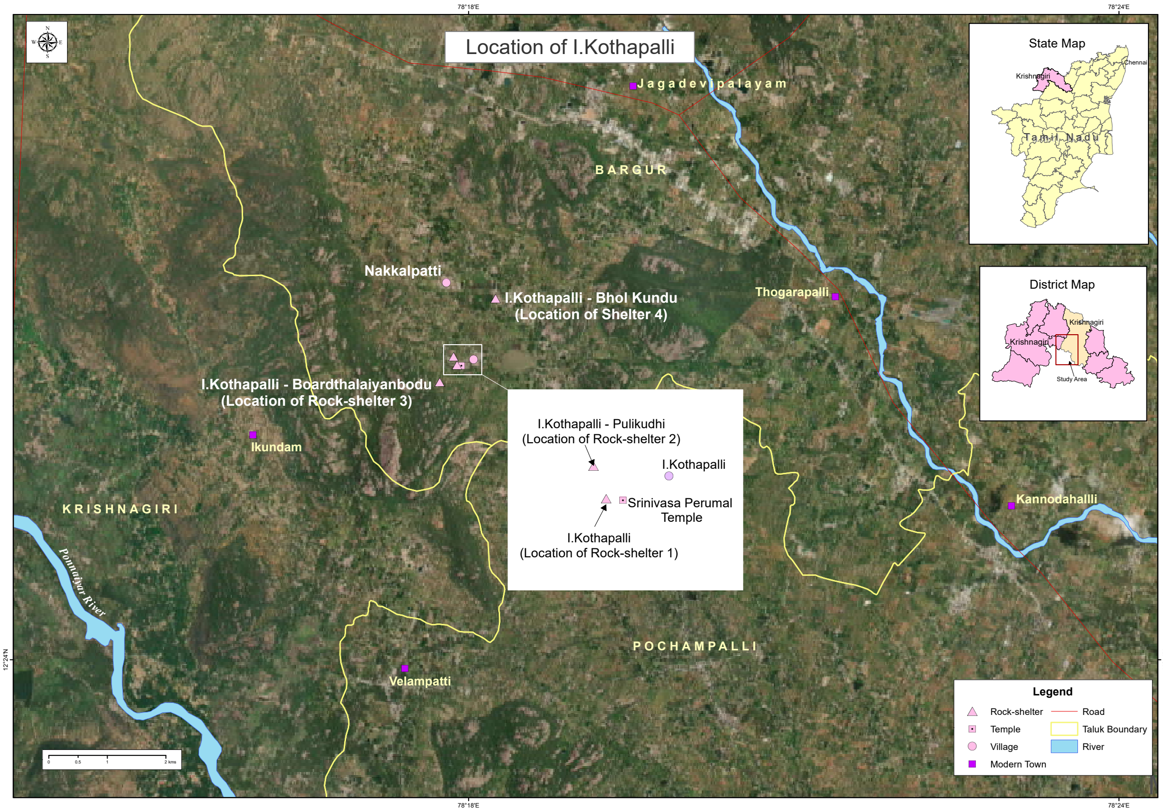
4.24. I.Kothapalli

The village I.Kothapalli (12.44616 N, 78.30070 E) is located at a distance of 17 km to the south-east of Krishnagiri and 7 km to the south of Jagadevi on the Jagadevi – I Kundam road. The village is surrounded by many hills and hillocks which are the extension of the Eastern Ghats (Map 4.24.1-4.24.2). A large hill called *Periyamalai* is located on the western side of the village. This hill is covered with thick thorny bushes. The paintings were noticed at two different localities namely Puliguddai and *Perumalswami hill.*

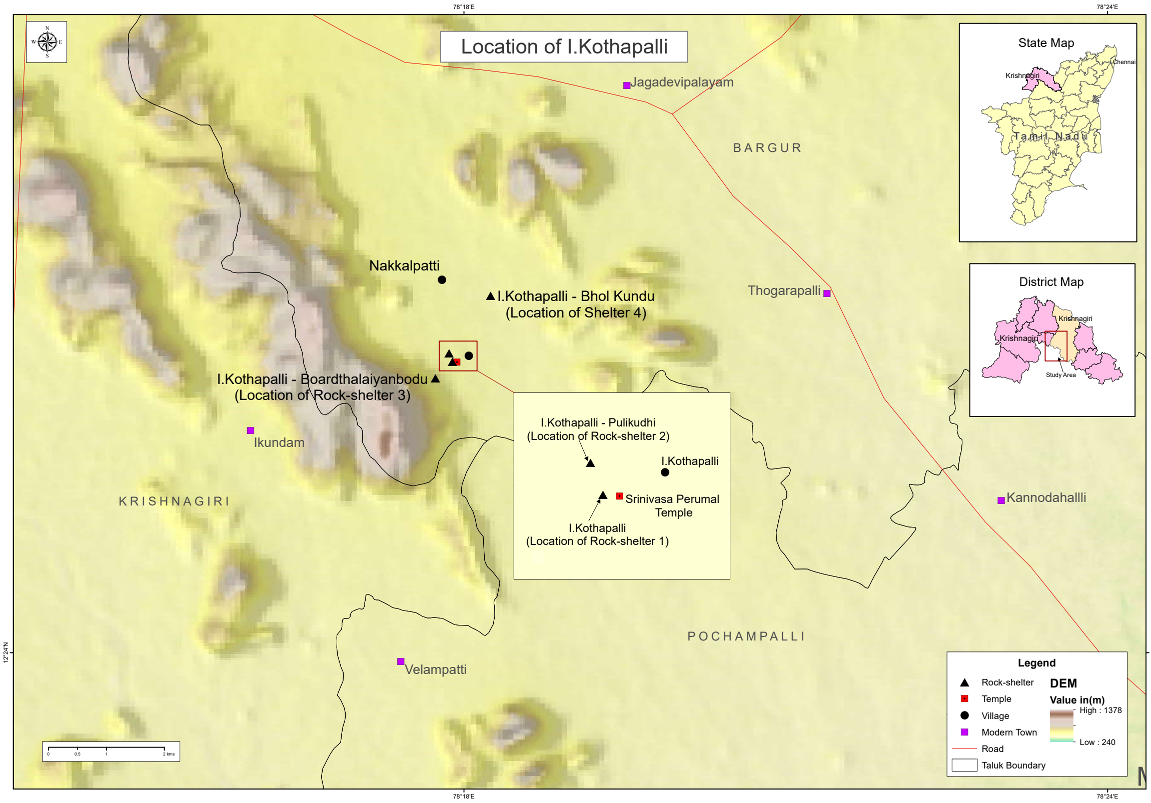
Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 7 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 6.80 m and the total height of the inclined rock surface is about 2m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2 m. The shelter no. 2 is having a total length of 3.80 m and the painted area is 3.20x4.60 m. The shelter no. 3 is having a total length of about 2.50 m and a breadth of 2 m and the overall painted area is 85 cm x 90 cm.

The shelter no.4 is having total length of about 3.80 m and a breadth of 1.60 m with an overall painted area of 3.70x1.30 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right (Fig.4.24.1-4.24.3).


Location of I.Kothapalli
Jagadevipalayam
BARGUR
Nakkalpatti
I.Kothapalli - Bhol Kundu
(Location of Shelter 4)
Thogarapalli
I.Kothapalli - Boardthalaiyanbodu
(Location of Rock-shelter 3)
Ikundam
I.Kothapalli - Pulikudhi
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
I.Kothapalli
Srinivasa Perumal Temple
I.Kothapalli
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Kannodahallli
KRISHNAGIRI
Ponnaiyar River
POCHAMPALLI
Velampatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
River
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°24'N

Map 4.24.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of I.Kothapalli
Jagadevipalayam
BARGUR
Nakkalpatti
I.Kothapalli - Bhol Kundu
(Location of Shelter 4)
Thogarapalli
I.Kothapalli - Boardthalaiyanbodu
(Location of Rock-shelter 3)
Ikundam
I.Kothapalli - Pulikudhi
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
I.Kothapalli
Srinivasa Perumal Temple
I.Kothapalli
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Kannodahallli
KRISHNAGIRI
POCHAMPALLI
Velampatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°24'N

Map 4.24.2 Location of the rock shelter

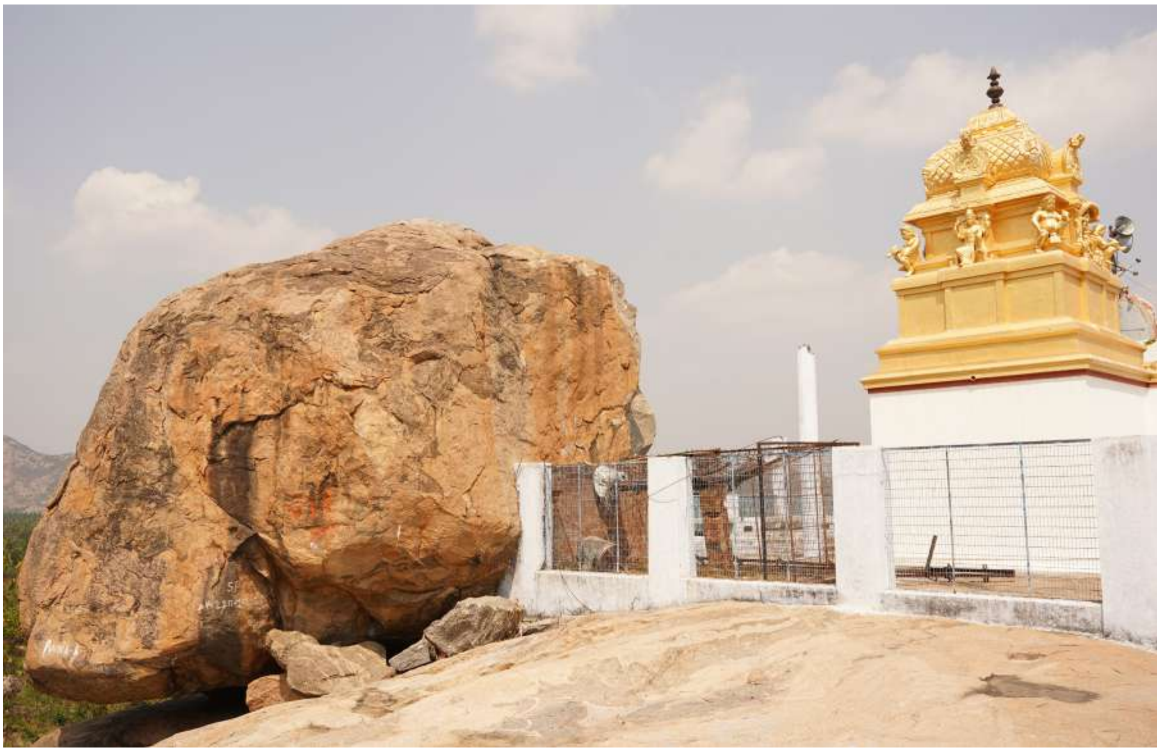


Fig. 4.24.1 General view of the rock shelter and modern temple

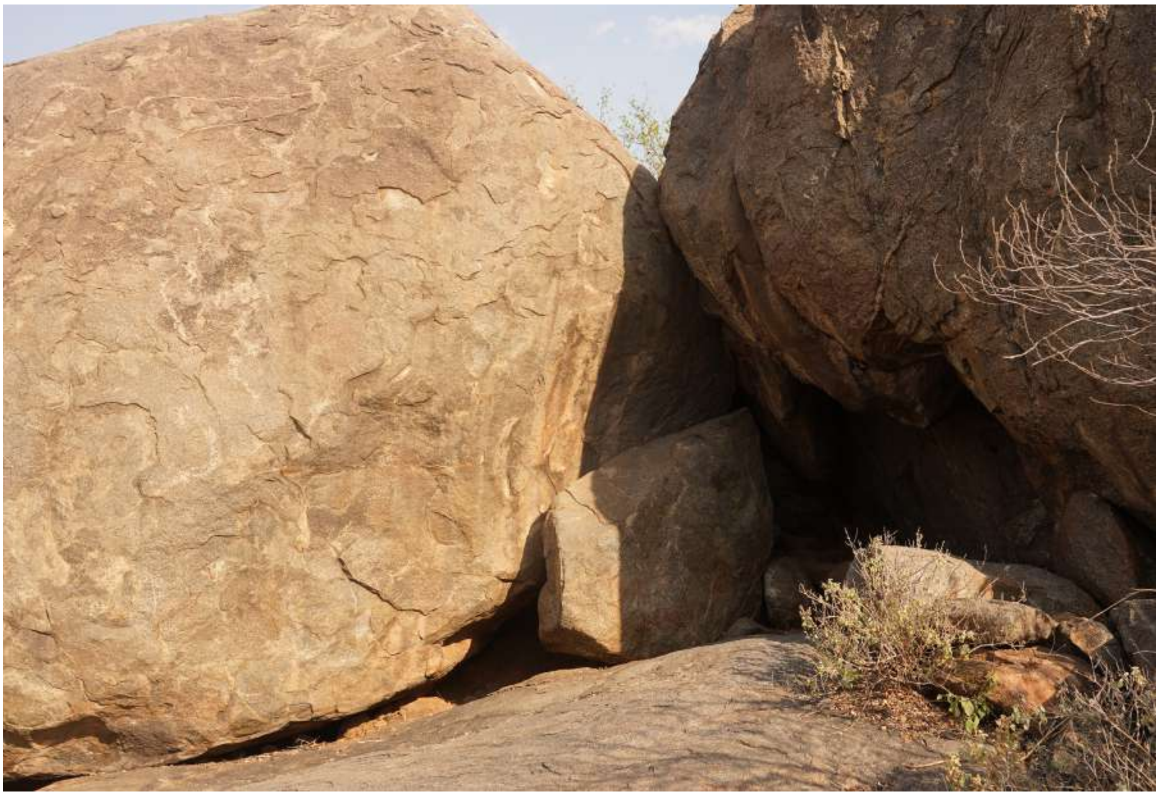


Fig. 4.24.2 General view of the rock shelter

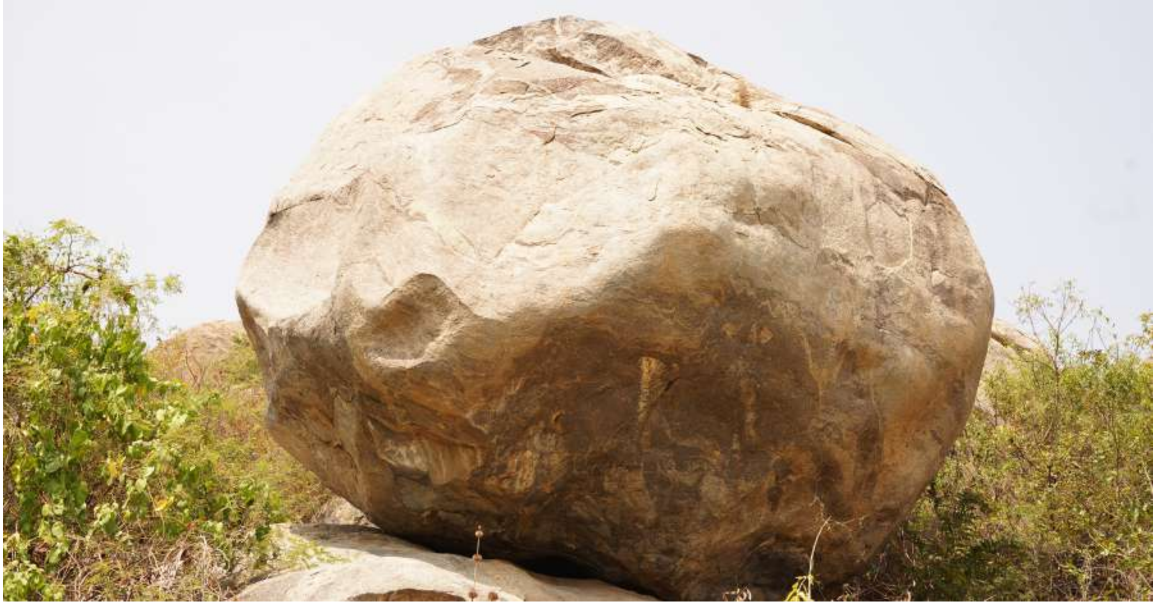


Fig. 4.24.3 General view of the rock shelter

Rock shelter-I

The first rock shelter measuring about 4 m in length and 2 m in width is facing south. It is located on top of the *Puliguddai* hillock and on the southern side of the slope of the hillock. The paintings are found on the walls of the boulder. Eight mountains were depicted in red ochre. This rock shelter has preserved paintings in white. Two human figures are seen in a standing posture decorated with red dots. Both of them are shown holding their weapons on their hips. Another human figure is depicted riding on an unidentifiable animal. A few paintings are found in faded condition.

Description

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of animal riders, humans with headgear, geometric signs, an arrow, a triangular and a *damaru*.

Panel Description

In this cluster, three human figures are drawn in a linear pattern and the body part is filled in white colour. In this painting, two human figures are drawn in standing position, one with a sword at his waist and the other hand is holding another person's hand. No weapon is found in the second person's waistband. Both the persons are draped up to the knees. Ahead of them, a human figure is shown riding on a cow-like animal. A weapon is shown in his hand and probably a sheath on his waist and in an attack position. The exterior of these three figures is drawn with a series of red dots. This method has not been shown anywhere else. Are these dots just for decoration? or ritual-related needs shutbe investigated.

Above these paintings, a row of triangles is drawn in red in a straight line. These may indicate mountain ranges. In areas where there are mountain passes, the practice of brigandage is still prevalent today. The phenomenon of encroachment is shown in the paintings at Anaipatti pass. This may also indicate a similar phenomenon.

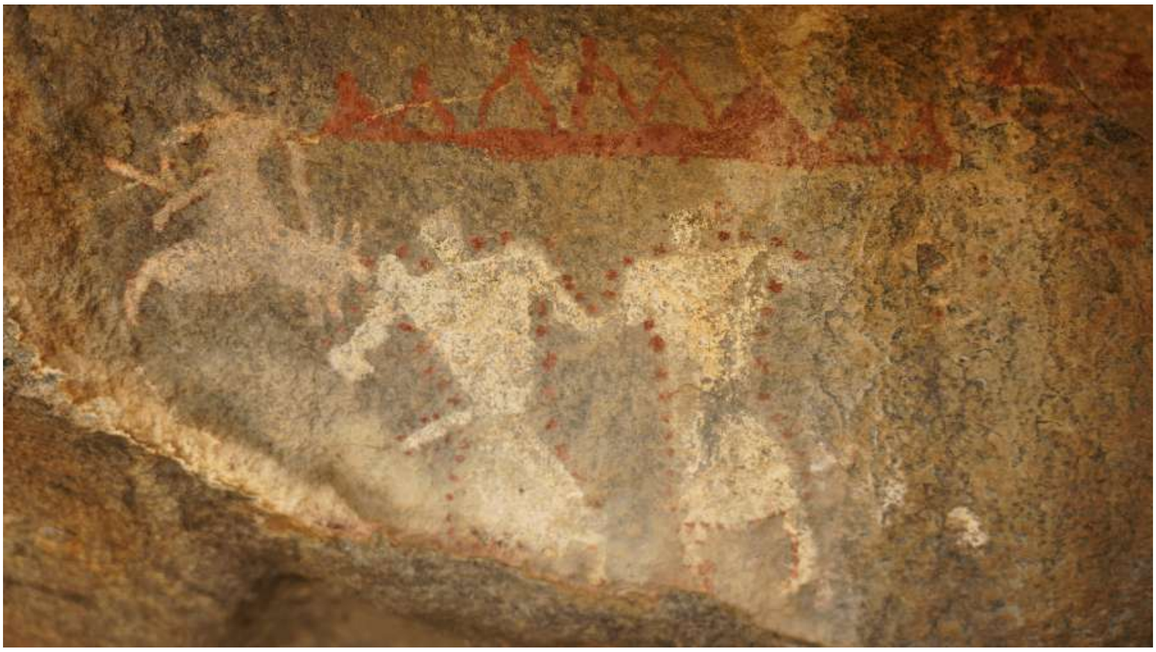


Fig. 4.24.4a *Animal rider with humans*

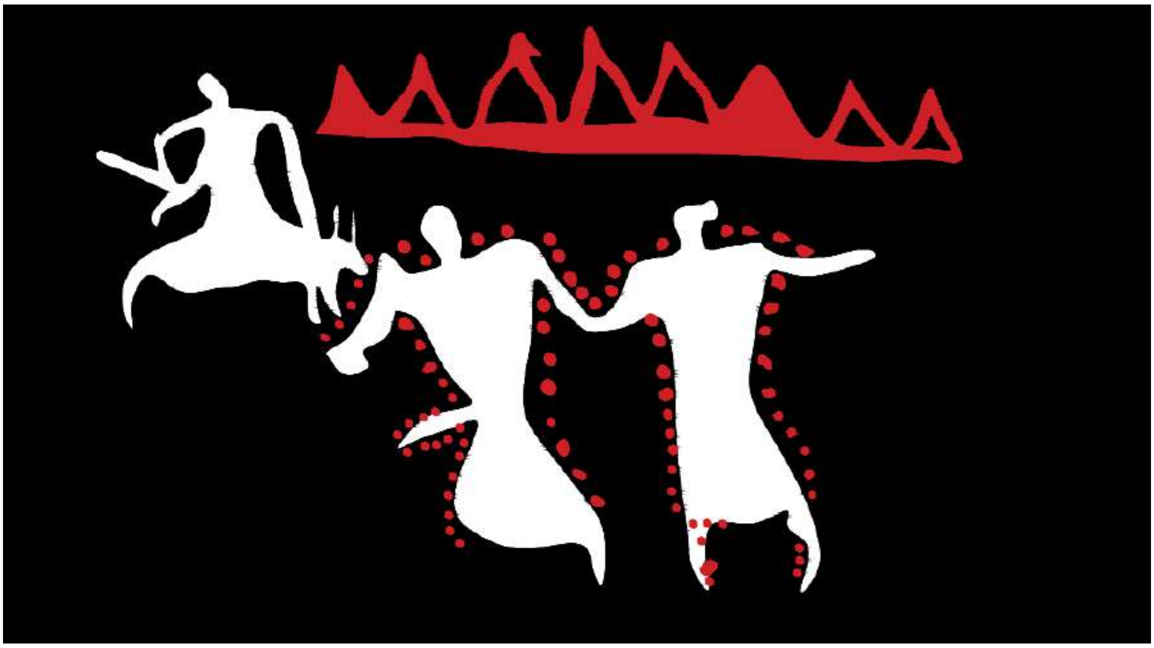


Fig. 4.24.4b *Animal rider with humans*

As such, these two colour paintings may have been painted at same the period (Fig. 4.24.4a-4.24.4b).

Rock Shelter-II

This rock-shelter is located just a few meters on the southern side of the *Puliguddaimalai* and the hillock is locally known as *Perumalswamymalai*. The paintings are noticed on top of the hill which is located backside of the Srinivasa Perumal Swamy temple. This shelter contains paintings on the ceiling and wall portions, executed in white (kaolin). The paintings comprise human figures, human riding on animals, human figures holting weapons, birds, geometrical patterns such as rectangle, square, wheel, trident, a unidentifiable figure and symbols.

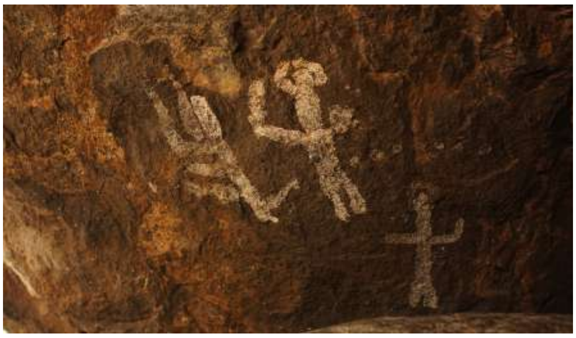


Fig. 4.24.5a Humans with head cap

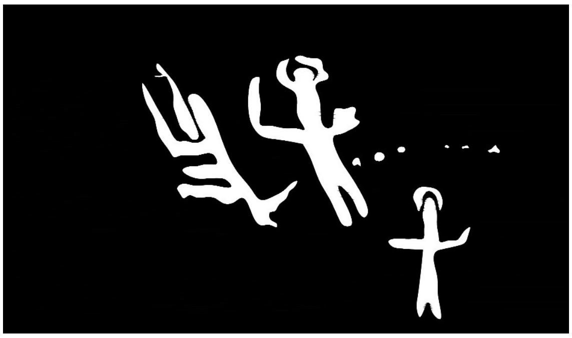


Fig. 4.24.5b Humans with head cap

In this cluster, three human figures are drawn in lines in white colour. The human figure below these two is shown in walking motion with one arm raised and legs stretched out. One of the human figures is shown holding a weapon in one hand. This figure has a headgear on head which may be a kind of crown. The figure next to it seems like a human figure, but it looks like a fallen figure (Fig. 4.24.5a-4.24.5b).

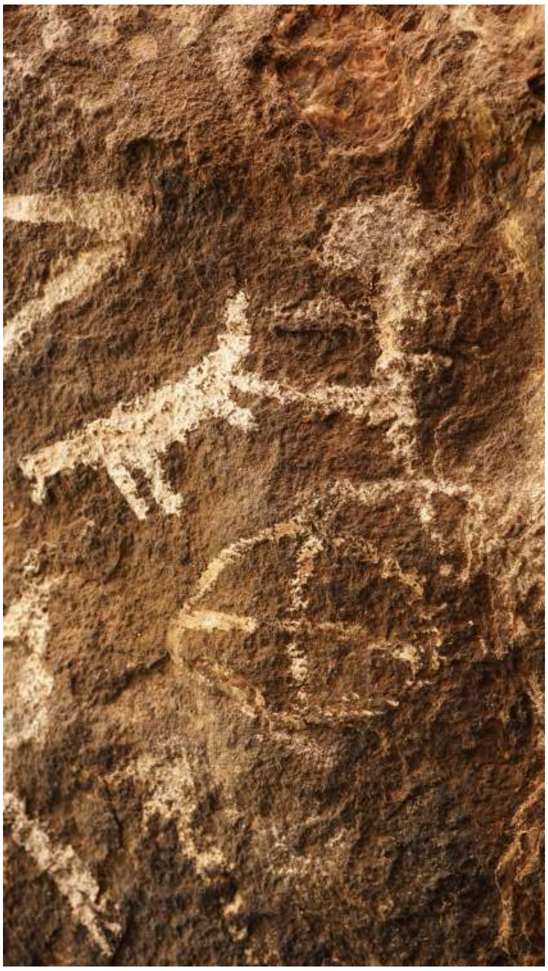


Fig. 4.24.6a Wheel and animal

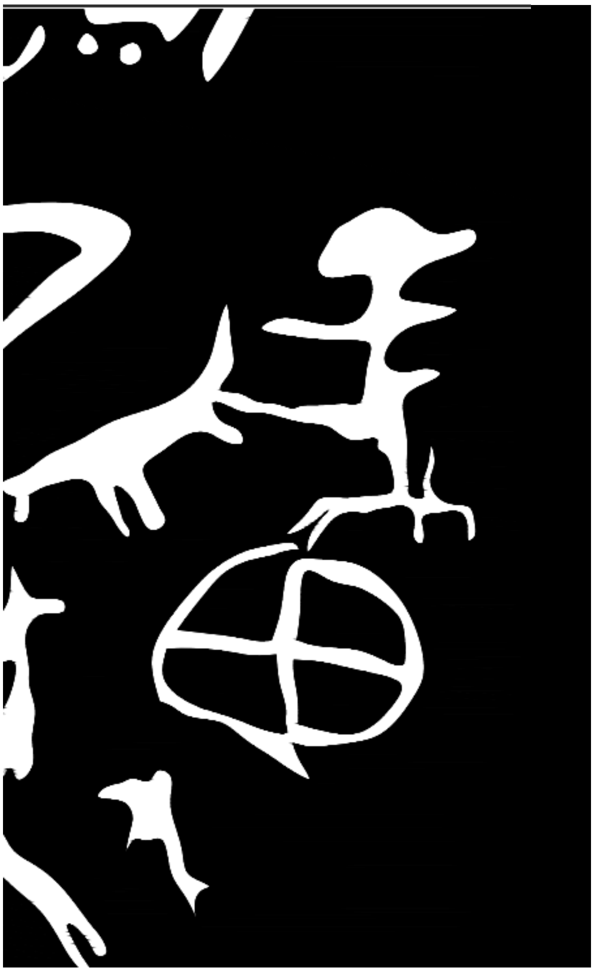


Fig. 4.24.6b Wheel and animal

There are some human and animal figures in this painting. That animal figure could be a hunting dog. Near this, a circle is drawn with a plus-like symbol. It is likely to be a hunting-related (hunting pit) scene (Fig. 4.24.6a-4.24.6b).

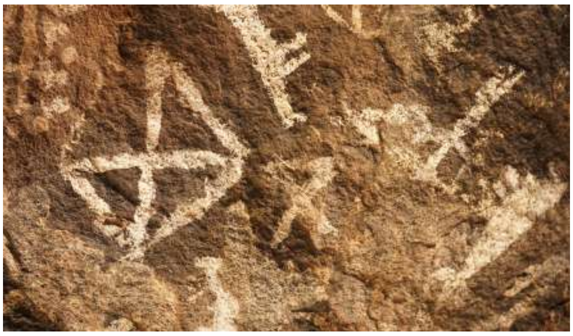


Fig. 4.24.7a Geometrical signs

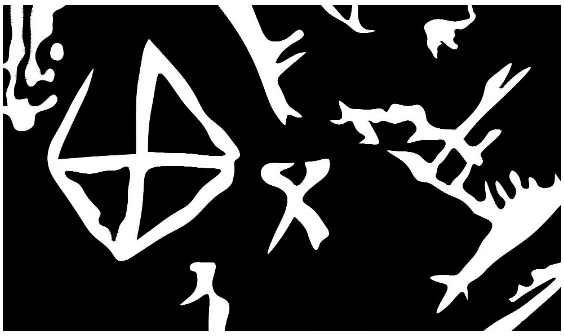


Fig. 4.24.7b Geometrical signs

In this cluster of paintings, a X-like symbol is drawn in a square shape. Around it, animal figures and human figures are drawn in simple lines. These seem to show one of the hunting methods (Fig. 4.24.7a-4.24.7b).

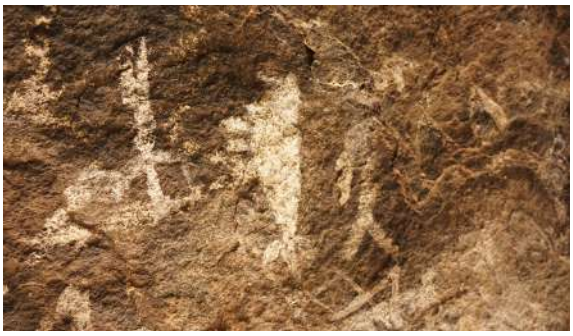


Fig. 4.24.8a Animal and human

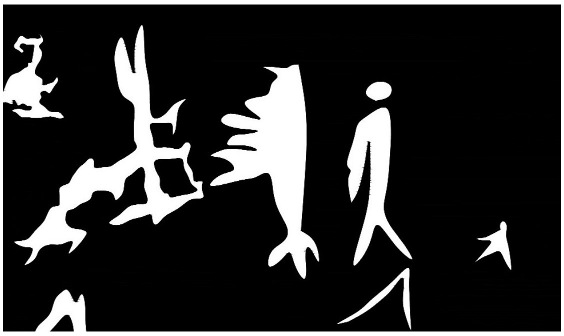


Fig. 4.24.8b Animal and human

Animal figures and human figures are shown side by side. These figures are drawn in thick and thin lines. It is not possible to fully understand, because these figures are distorted (Fig. 4.24.8a-4.24.8b).

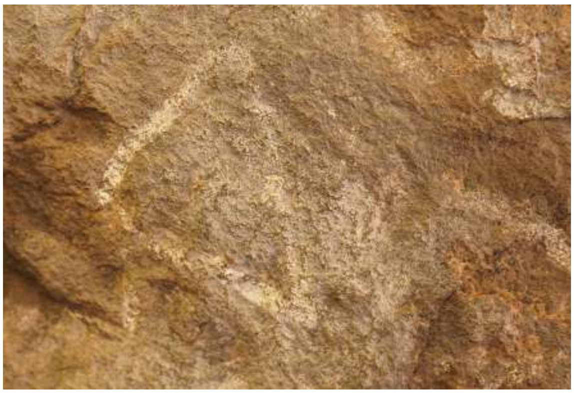


Fig. 4.24.9a Triangular

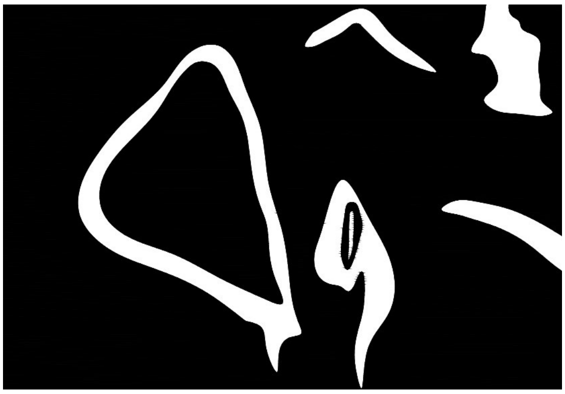


Fig. 4.24.9b Triangular

Here, the triangular shape is drawn separately. The artist who drew paintings in this cave knew the geometrical differences like circle, square and triangle. (Fig. 4.24.9a-4.24.9b).

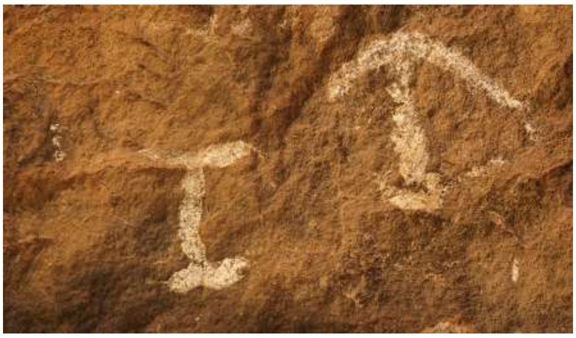


Fig. 4.24.10a *Arrow and English alphabet "I"*

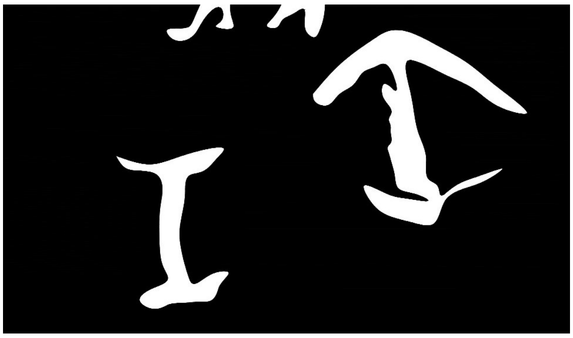


Fig. 4.24.10b *Arrow and English alphabet "I"*

Two symbols are drawn here. Among these two symbols, one looks like an English alphabet 'I' and another one looks like an arrowhead (Fig. 4.24.10a-4.24.10b).

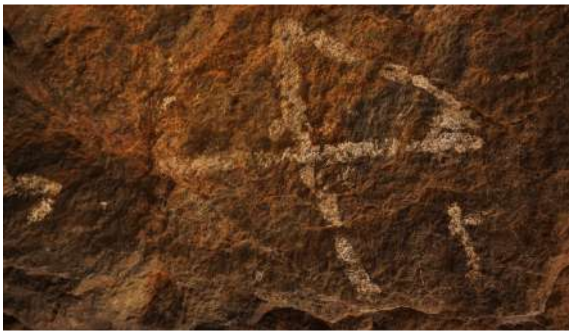


Fig. 4.24.11a "Damaru" like sign

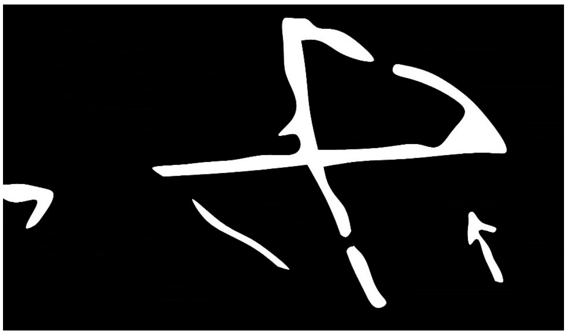


Fig. 4.24.11b "Damaru" like sign

A infinity-like symbol or *damaru* is drawn (Fig. 4.24.11a-4.24.11b).

A human figure is shown with both arms outstretched and playing with something like a fire-torch and the person wears a headgear. In the months of *Karthikai,* the custom of *'Mavali'* is still practised in rural areas. This painting may be an earlier

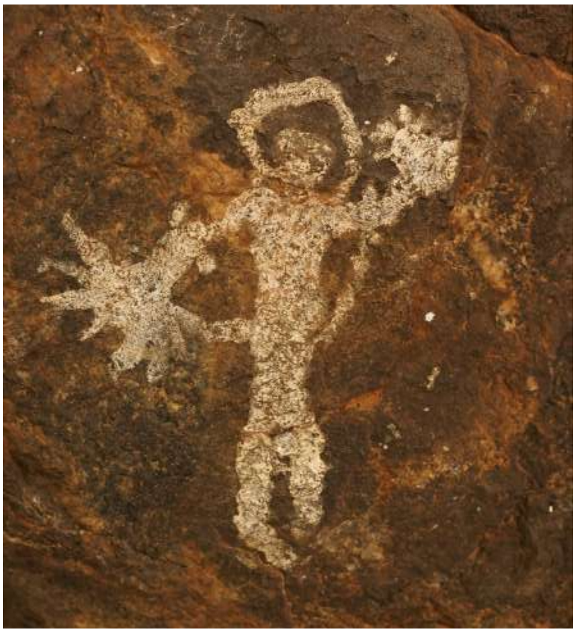


Fig. 4.24.12a Human with head cap

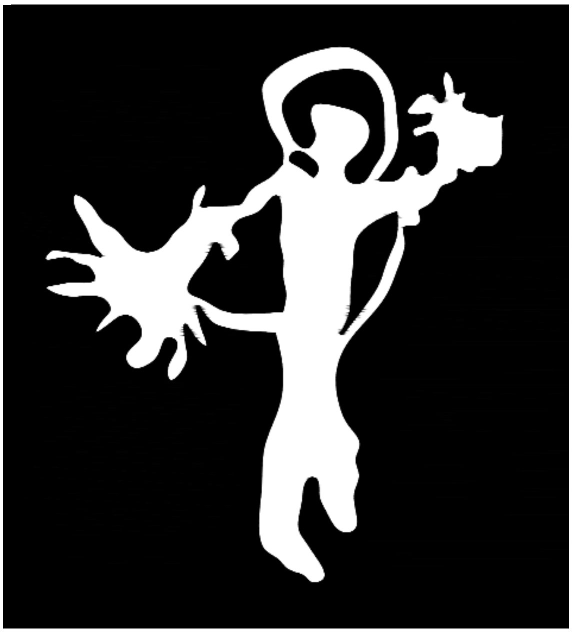


Fig. 4.24.12b Human with head cap

form of such an event. A human figure with natural body language can be seen in very elegant simple lines (Fig. 4.24.12a-4.24.12b).

Rock Shelter III

In this panel, two clusters of paintings are present and both are in white. In the first cluster, three images namely a geometrical symbol, animal figure and a human holding a weapon are depicted. At left, a symbol is drawn and at some distance the live figures are drawn depicting a hunting scene as the human is trying to attack the animal. Human and animal figures are faded in this painting, head and body of the animal is not differentiated as much, two legs are only clearly seen. In the second cluster, a human figure was painted. His legs and hands are outstretched and he holds something in his hand, it is long and curvy, an unidentified symbol drawn above the human (Fig. 4.24.13a-4.24.13b).

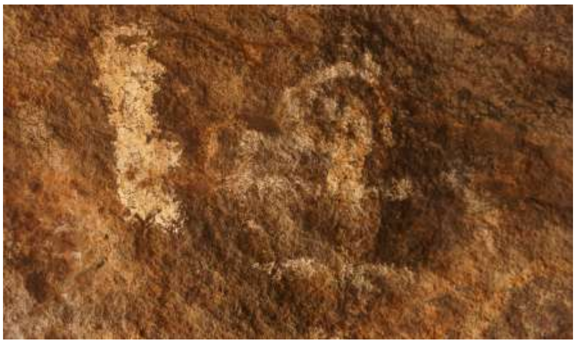


Fig. 4.24.13a Animal

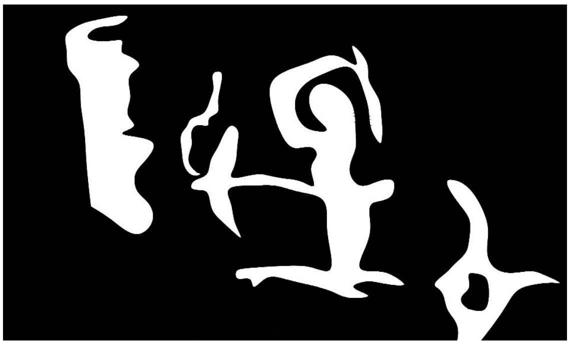


Fig. 4.24.13b Animal

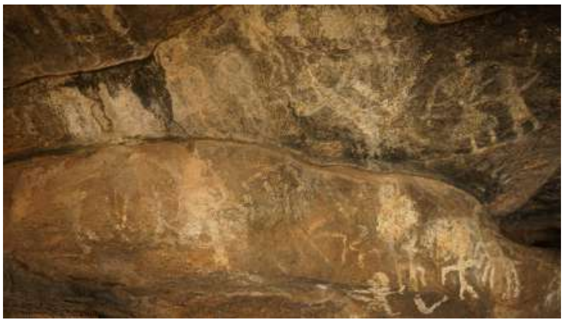


Fig. 4.24.14a Humans and animals

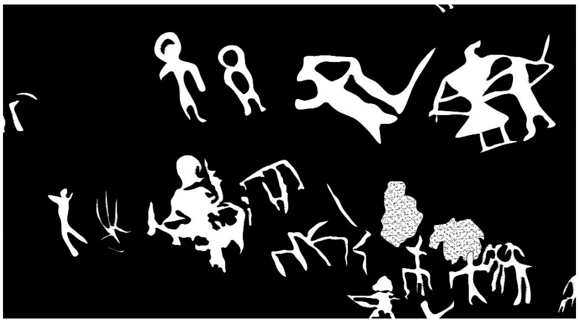


Fig. 4.24.14b Humans and animals

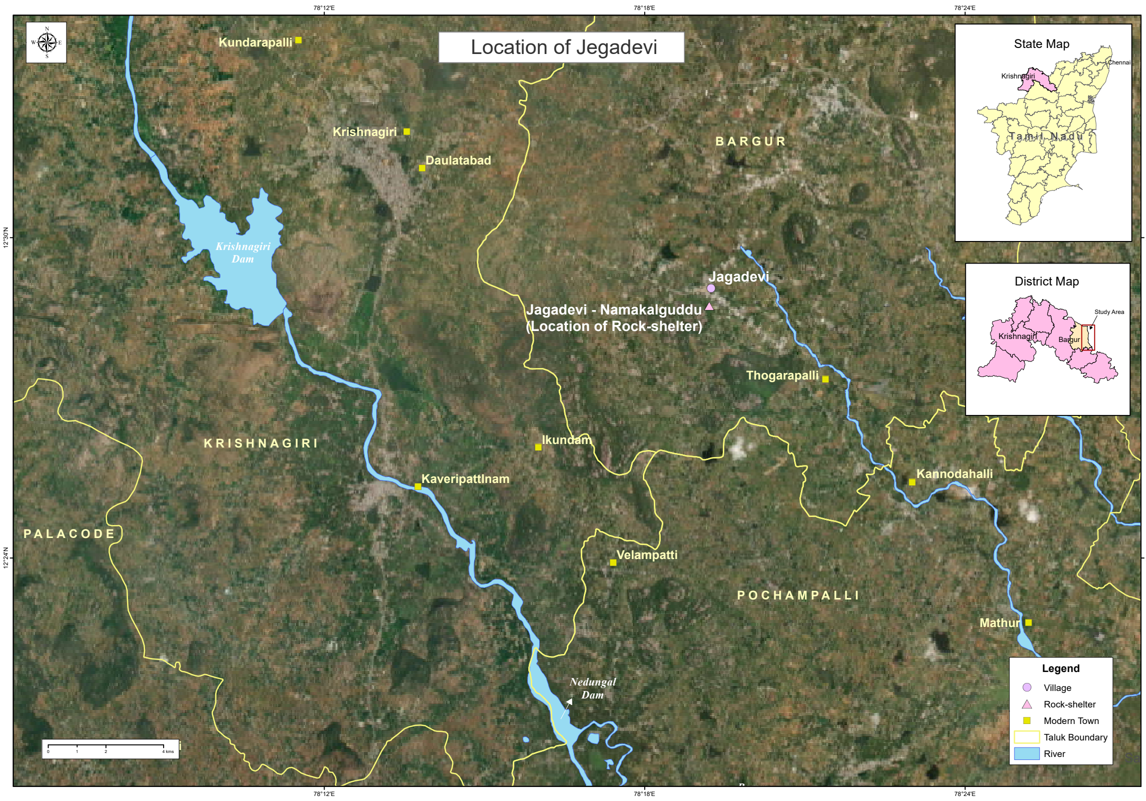
Rock Shelter IV

In this panel two rows of figures, painted in white. Some paintings are faded. In both rows, 9 human figures, 2 animal figures, weapons and some geometric symbols are identified. In the first row, a female figure and a child are depicted in the right corner and other human figures are not clearly seen. In the second row, trident symbols are present and after that five human figures are painted and they are drawn in a marching posture. At the end, two human figures are found and an animal is drawn in the centre and it looks like both of them are cutting the animal (Fig. 4.24.14a-4.24.14b).

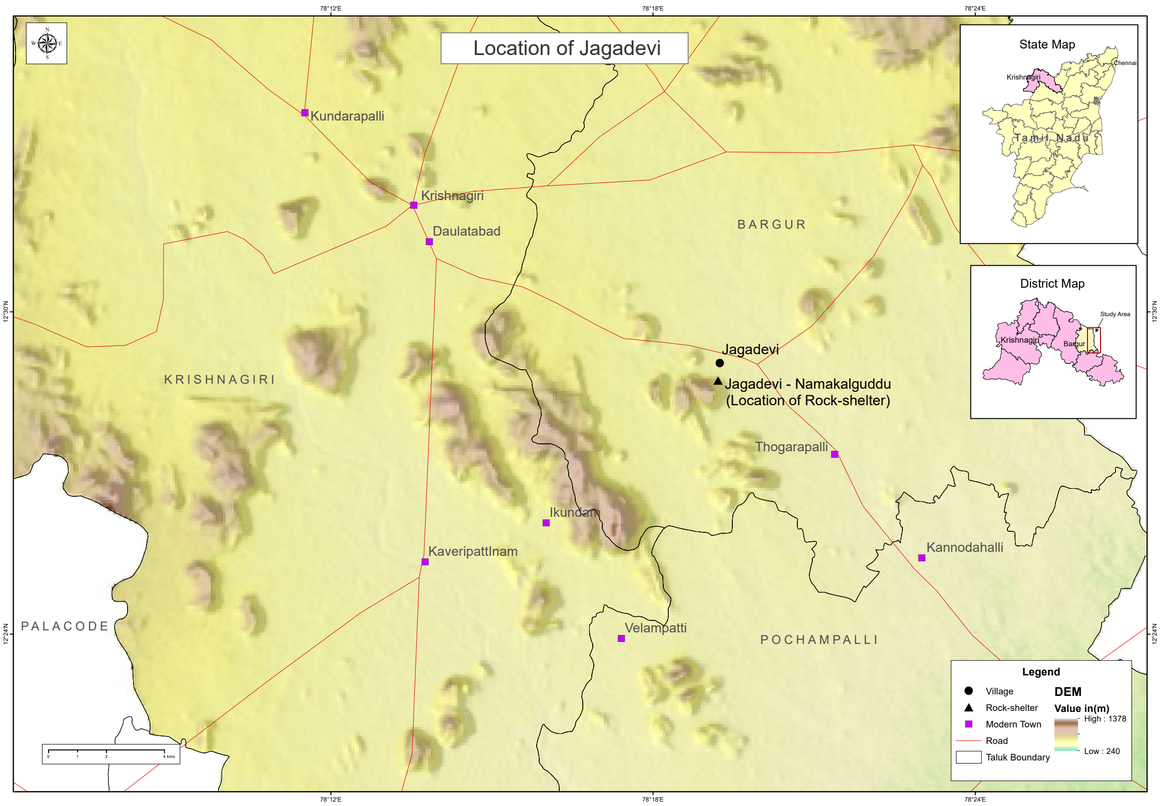
4.25. Jegadevimalai

The village Jagadevi (12.48266 N; 78.31818a E) lies on the Krishnagiri -Thiruvannamalai road at a distance of 14 km to the east of Krishnagiri (Map 4.25.1-

4.25.2). There is a large hill locally called Jagadevimalai and the hill contains many natural rock shelters, a historical fort and fortification. One of the rock shelters locally known as *Namakalguddu* is located 2 km to the south-east of the village.


Location of Jegadevi
Kundarapalli
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Krishnagiri Dam
Jagadevi
Jagadevi - Namakalguddu (Location of Rock-shelter)
Thogarapalli
KRISHNAGIRI
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Kannodahalli
PALACODE
Velampatti
POCHAMPALLI
Mathur
Nedungal Dam
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.25.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Jagadevi
Kundarapalli
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Jagadevi
Jagadevi - Namakalguddu (Location of Rock-shelter)
KRISHNAGIRI
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Kannodahalli
PALACODE
Velampatti
POCHAMPALLI
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.25.2 Location of the rock shelter

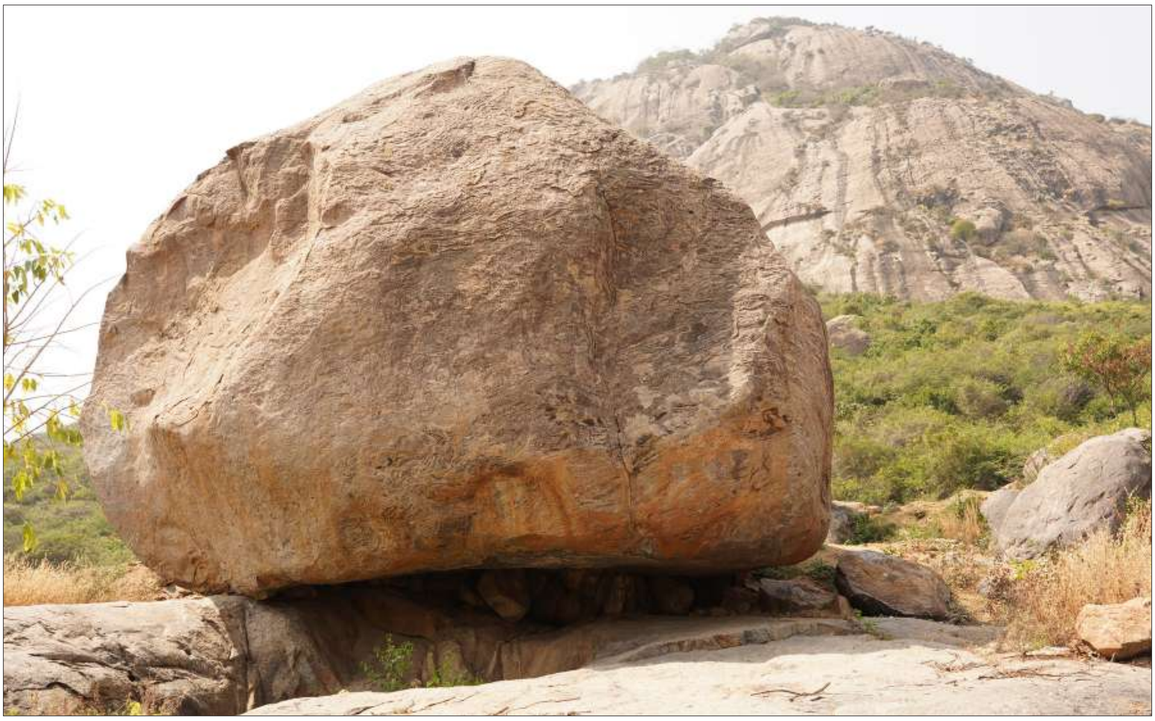


Fig. 4.25.1 General view of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The length of the painted surface is about 5 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 9 m and the total height of the inclined surface is 5 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 4 m. The total area of the painted surface is 3.50 x6.40 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right (Fig. 4.25.1).

Description

A human figure is shown in standing posture with a headdress and his five fingers are shown clearly. Besides, this painting is shown in a double line square pattern with numerous floral designs. Below that human figure, there are paintings in a faded condition. There are four human figures shown in a row, facing each other, two of them are holding a sword. It clearly indicates a conflict between two different groups. Another human figure is noticed in a standing posture with two hands and one of the legs raised. On the other side of the boulder, a group of 9 human figures is seen with weapons (swords). Apart from these paintings, a few abstract symbols are noticed in geometric and non-geometric patterns.

The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of human figures, an animal rider, a double square box having sun, human, family, inverted trident, trident and hunter holding an object could be seen in the Jagadevimalai paintings.

Panel Description

The figure shown is an anthropomorphic figure in flat wash, having two prominent legs. The right hand is outstretched and the left hand is disproportionately long. Due to the water activity in the shelter, the head portion of the figure is faded. The painting shows a thin waist compared to other parts of his body. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.2a-4.25.2b).

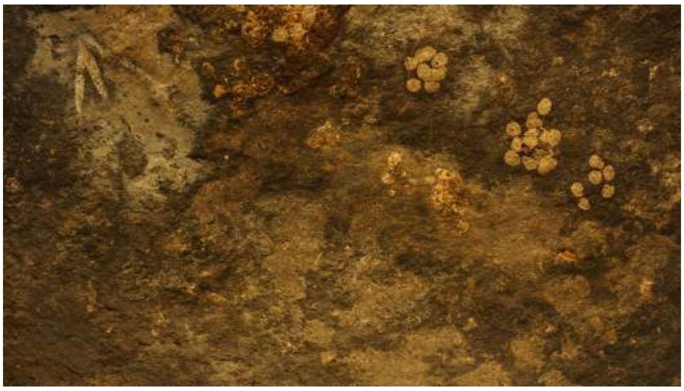


Fig. 4.25.2a Human figure

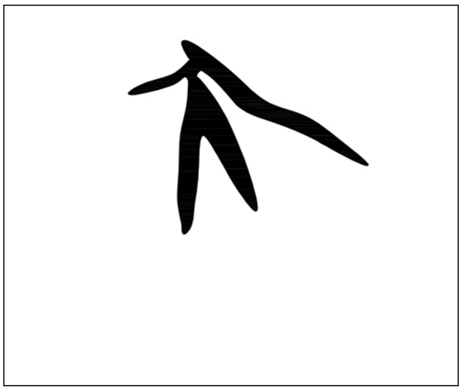


Fig. 4.25.2b Human figure

The figure shows (Fig. 4.25.3a-4.25.3b) a human riding an animal. The human is mounted on a goat like animal (buffalo?), outstretched both the hands in which his right hand is raised with bent upwards. The headgear worn by the human figure has two projections and one of the projections is shown raised upwards. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.3a-4.25.3b).

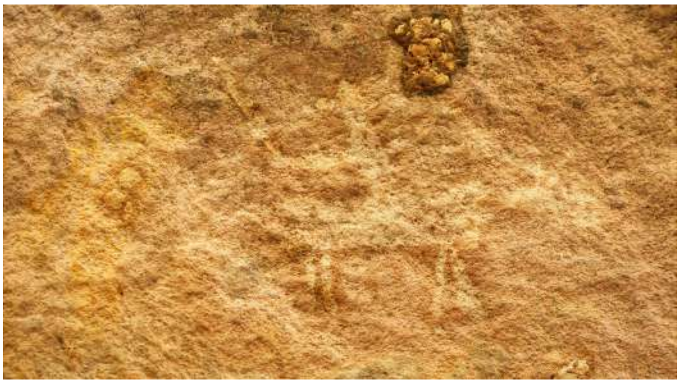


Fig. 4.25.3b Animal rider

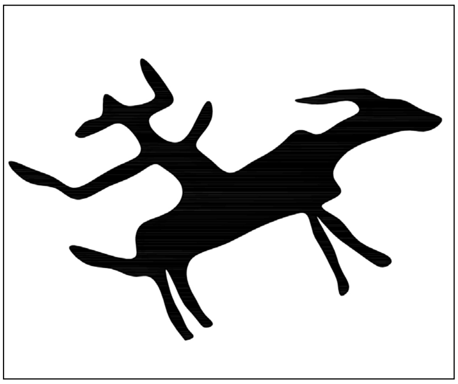


Fig. 4.25.3a Animal rider

Two human figures are depicted separately riding animals. An the top right side the human is shown mounted on an animal and his right hand is raised upwards and the weapon like object is held on his left hand. At the bottom left, a human is mounted on an animal, where his both hands are outstretched. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.4a-4.25.4b).

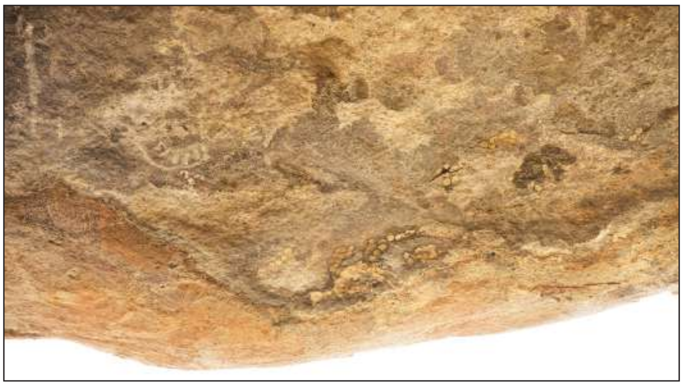


Fig. 4.25.4a Animal riders

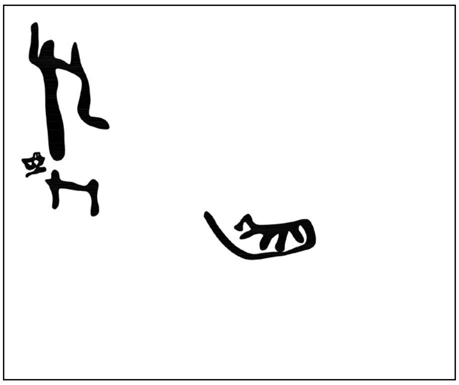


Fig. 4.25.4b Animal riders

The sun symbols are painted on the four outer corners of a double-lined square and at the centre a big-sized sun image is painted. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.5a-4.25.5b).

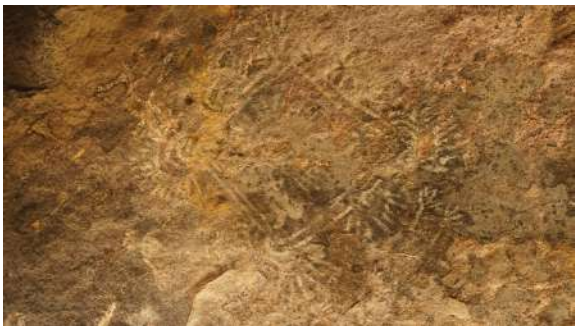


Fig. 4.25.5a Double square box having sun

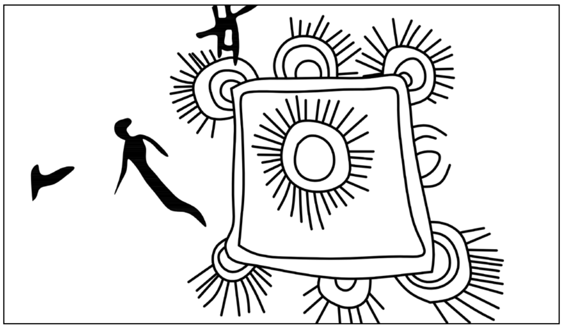


Fig. 4.25.5b Double square box having sun

The figure is shown with a human positioned in motion with raised hands. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.6a-4.25.6b).

Fig. 4.25.6a Human

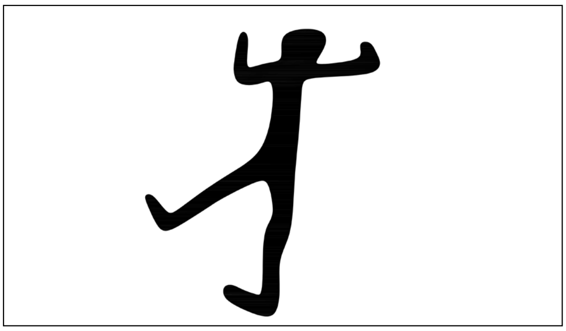


Fig. 4.25.6b Human

The human figures are shown as a family. In the family, where a mother has dressed up with clothes like skirt. The children are painted in a small image form, suggesting that the family is happy which is expressed in the form of kids raising their hands. The colour of the painting is white. In another context, a husband and wife are stopped by others (Fig. 4.25.7a-4.25.7b).

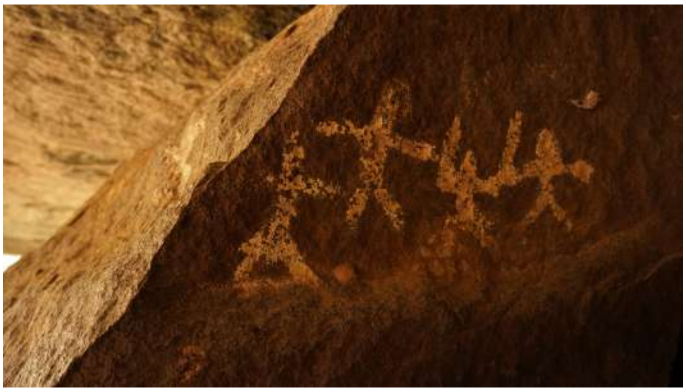


Fig. 4.25.7a Family

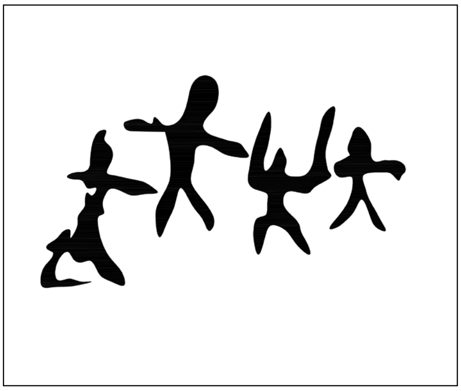


Fig. 4.25.7b Family

The standing human figure is depicted, with hands free. The painting is found in faded condition. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.8a-4.25.8b).

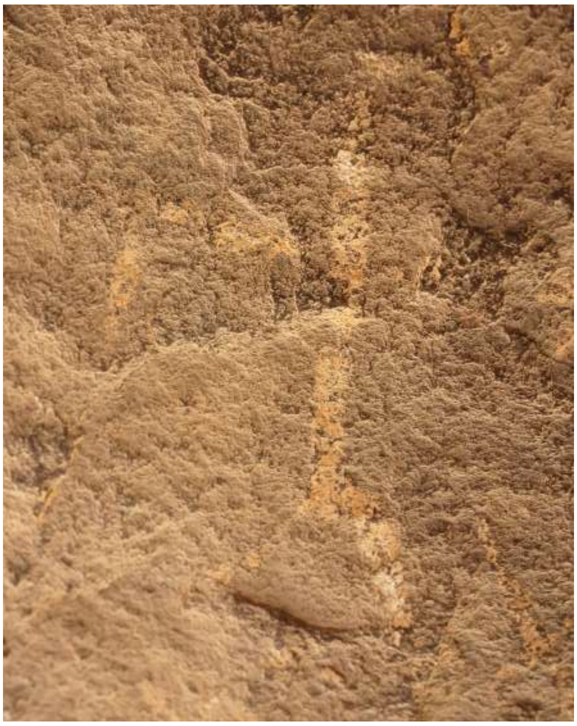


Fig. 4.25.8a Human

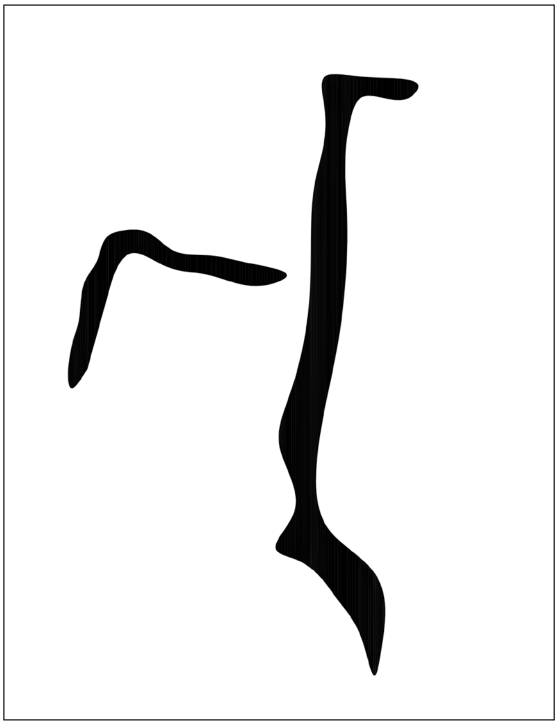


Fig. 4.25.8b Human

The human figure is shown in a standing form, with outstretched hands. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.9a-4.25.9b).

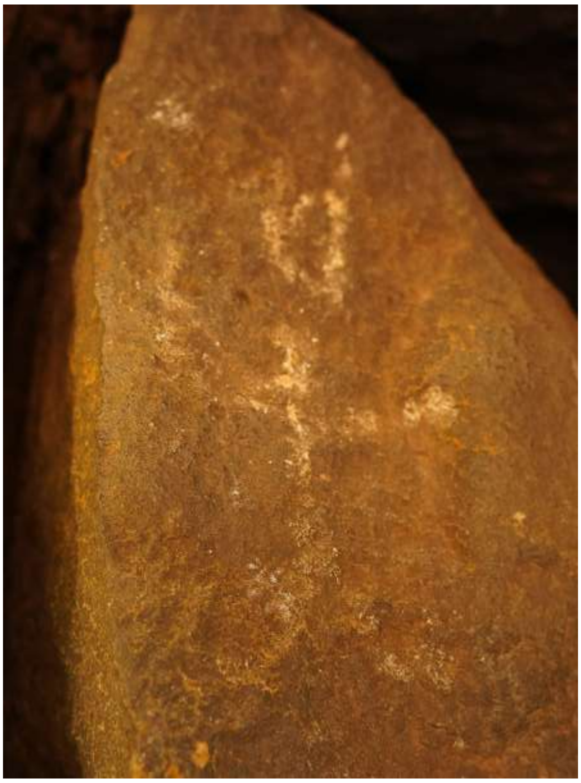


Fig. 4.25.9a Human

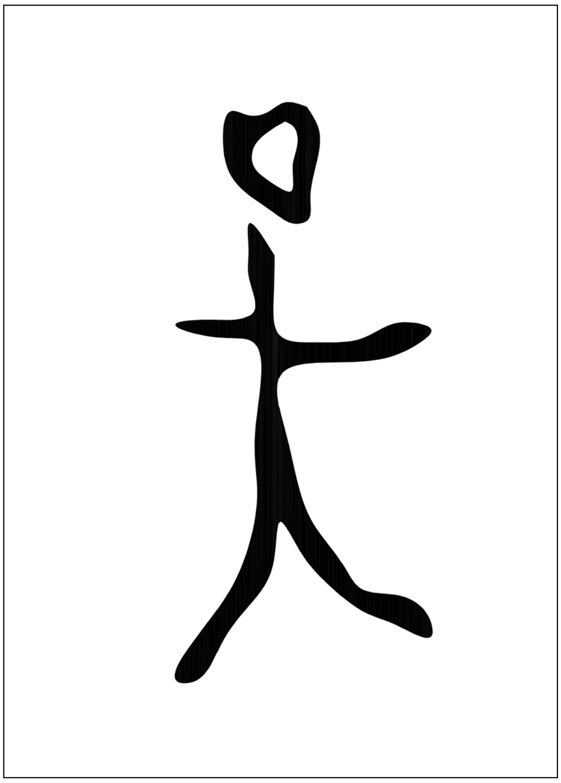


Fig. 4.25.9b Human

The standing human figure is shown with hands free. The painting is faded. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.10a-4.25.10b).

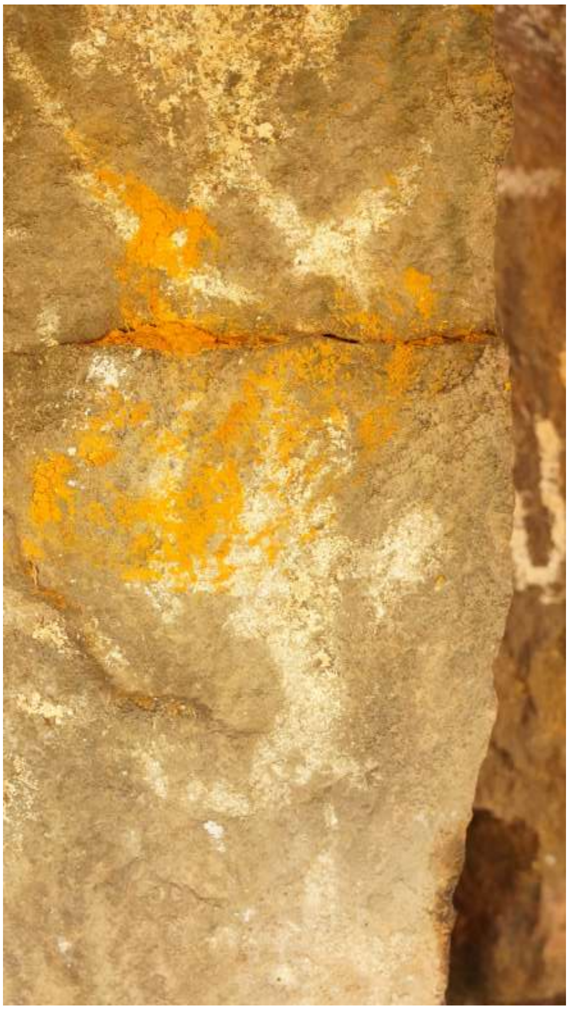


Fig. 4.25.10a Human

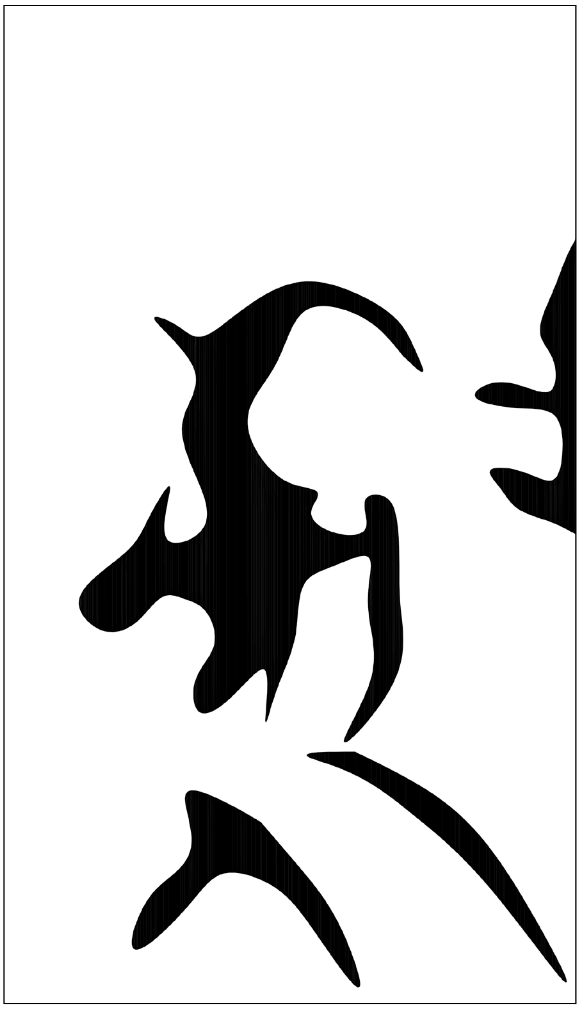


Fig. 4.25.10b Human

The figure is shown with a trident-like image added with one vertical line. It is decorated with small circles in all four corners. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.11a-4.25.11b).

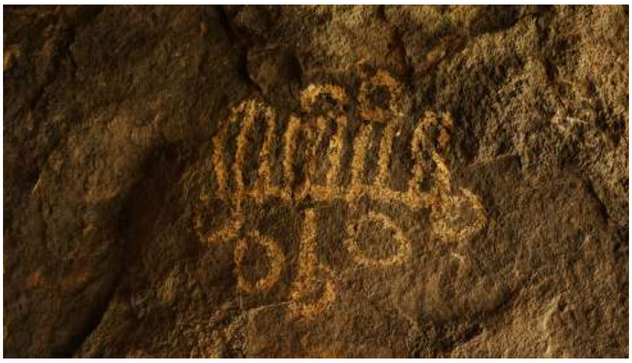


Fig. 4.25.11a Unidentified scene

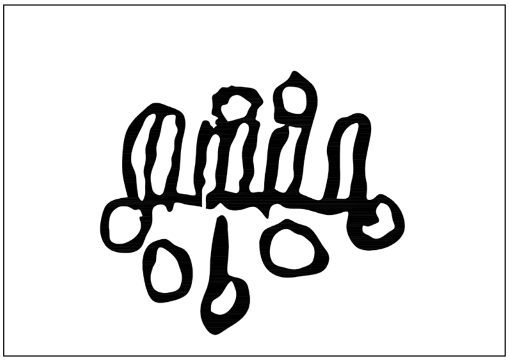


Fig. 4.25.11b Unidentified scene

The figure is a trident-like image with four double-lined spokes one vertical line. The flower-like image is added with a diagonal stroke on its right corner. The trident-like image is added with one vertical line on its right side and it is decorated with a small circle in all four corners. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.12a-4.25.12b).

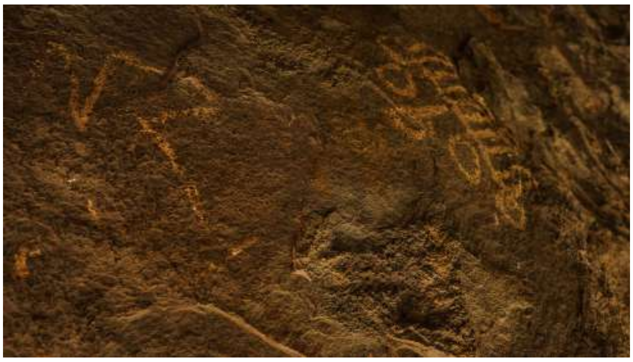


Fig. 4.25.12a Flower with an unidentified image

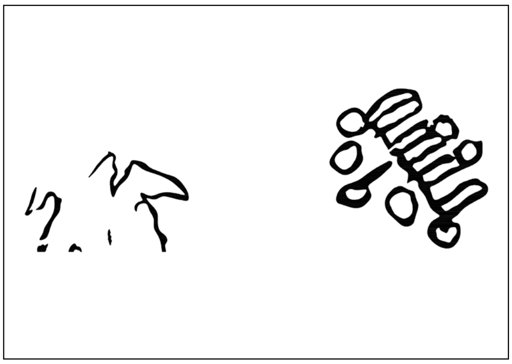


Fig. 4.25.12b Flower with an unidentified image

Three hunters are standing with weapons. On top of the panel, a hunter is standing with weapons in his hands. At the bottom, two hunters are standing with weapons. A "U" shaped image is painted near the hunters. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.13a-4.25.13b).

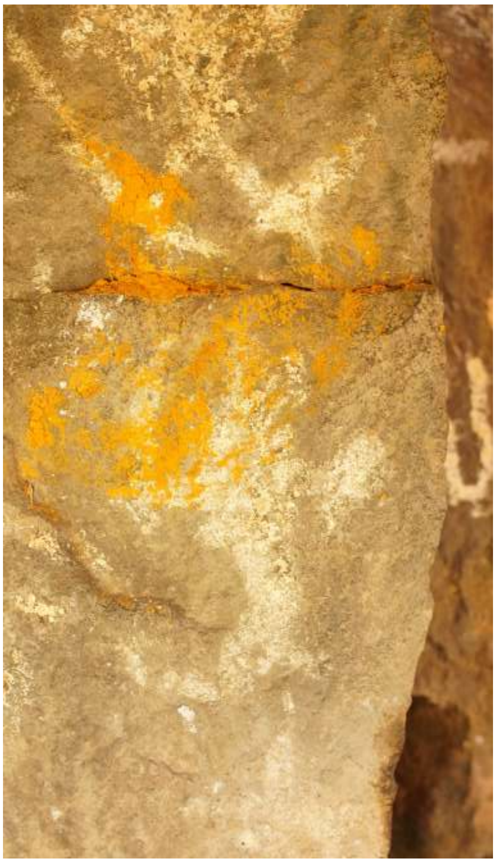


Fig. 4.25.13a Hunters with weapons

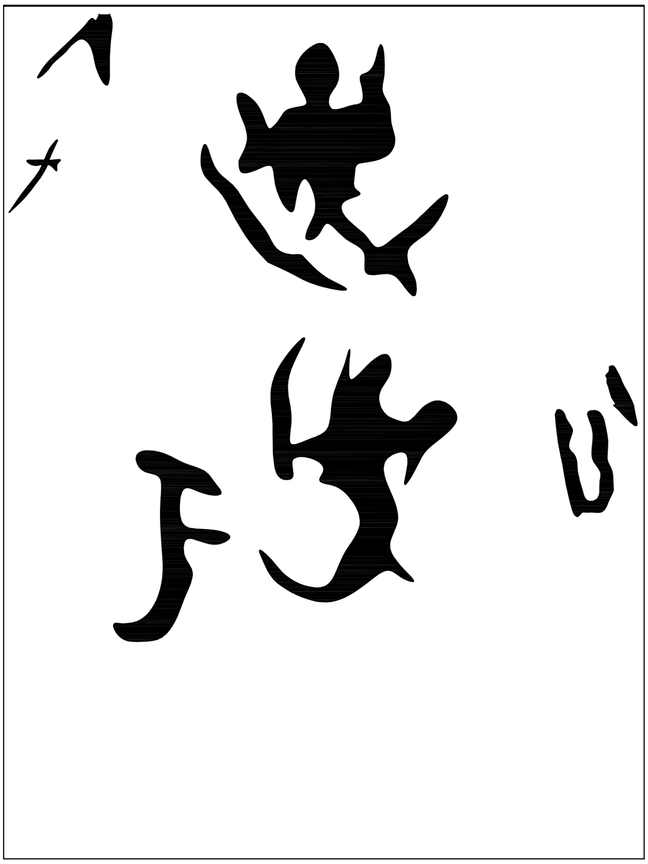


Fig. 4.25.13b Hunters with weapons

There are several thin line drawings made in white colour such as, five-spoke trident, a hook, an arrow and multiple strokes of abstract lines of which the content is unknown, due to fading. (Fig. 4.25.14a-4.25.14b).

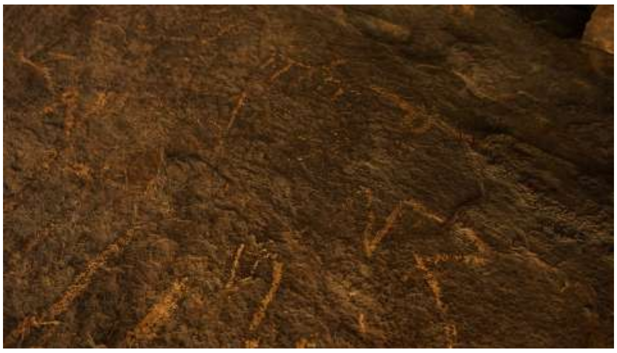


Fig. 4.25.14a Flower, trident like image and unidentified images

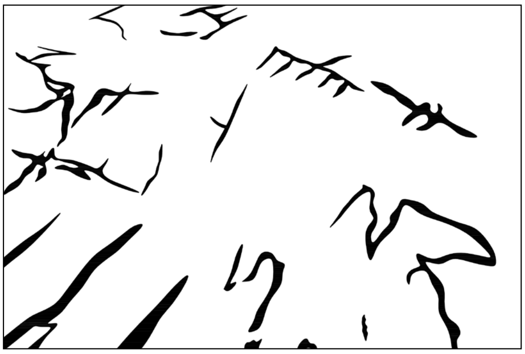


Fig. 4.25.14b Flower, trident like image and unidentified images

The human figure standing with a weapon in his right hand placed on his head is depicted. The painting is faded; therefore the lower part is not visible. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.15a-4.25.15b).

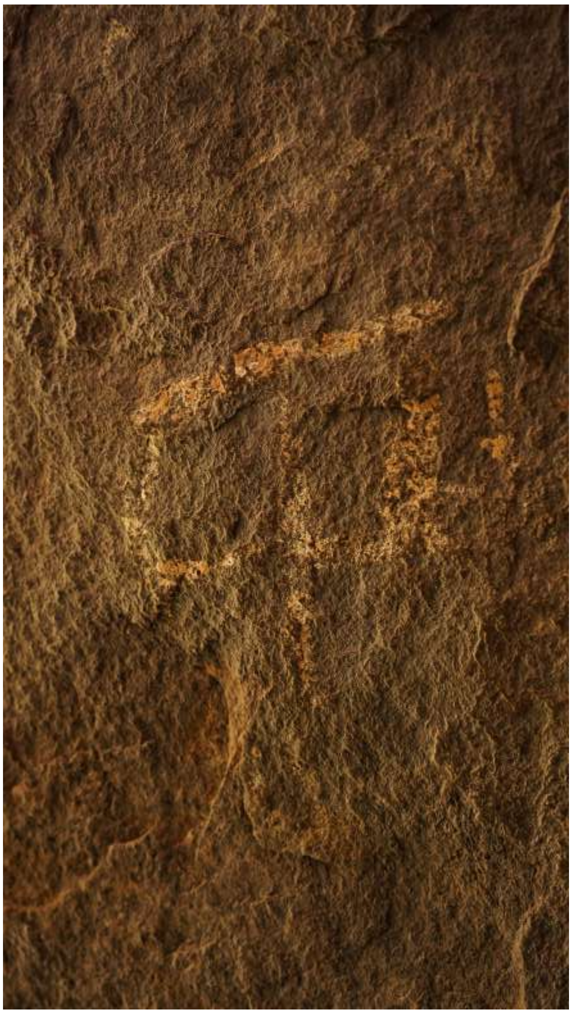


Fig. 4.25.15a Scene of a human with a weapon

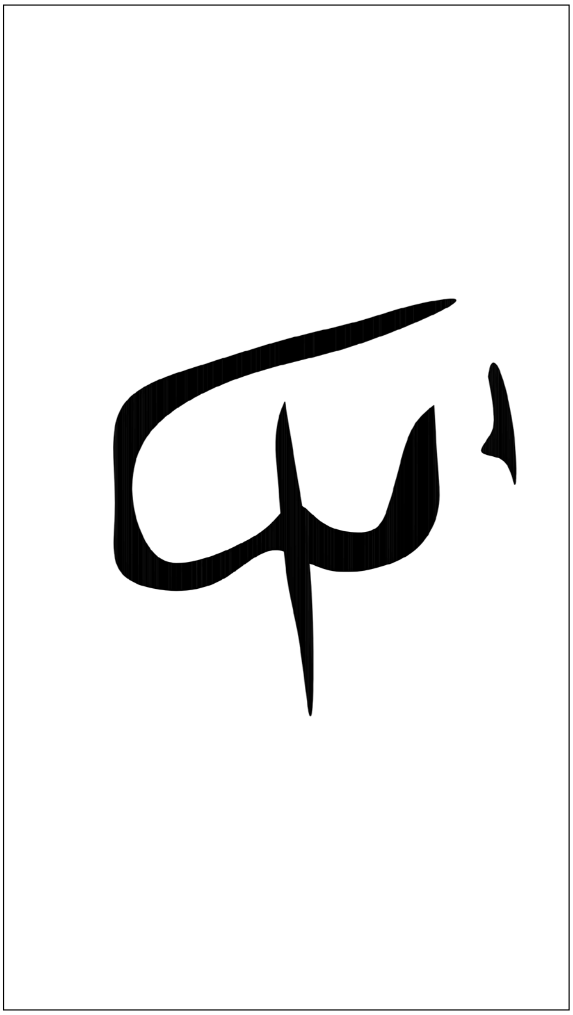


Fig. 4.25.15b Scene of a human with a weapon

The figure is shown with two hunters standing with weapons. The hunter is in the middle with the weapon in his right hand. At the bottom, another hunter image is painted and the painting is in faded condition. The "X" like sign is painted at the top left of the panel. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.16a-4.25.16b).

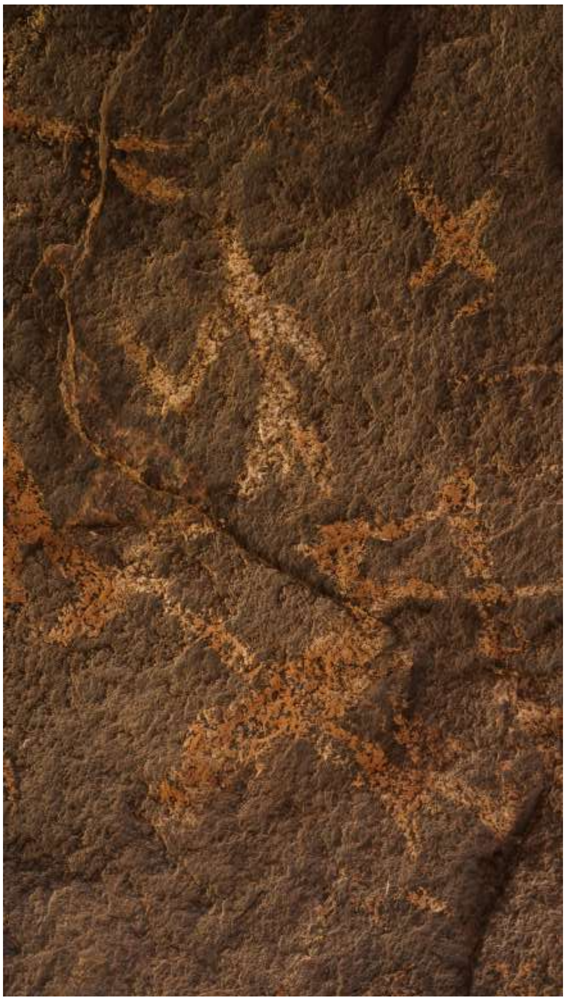


Fig. 4.25.16a Hunters

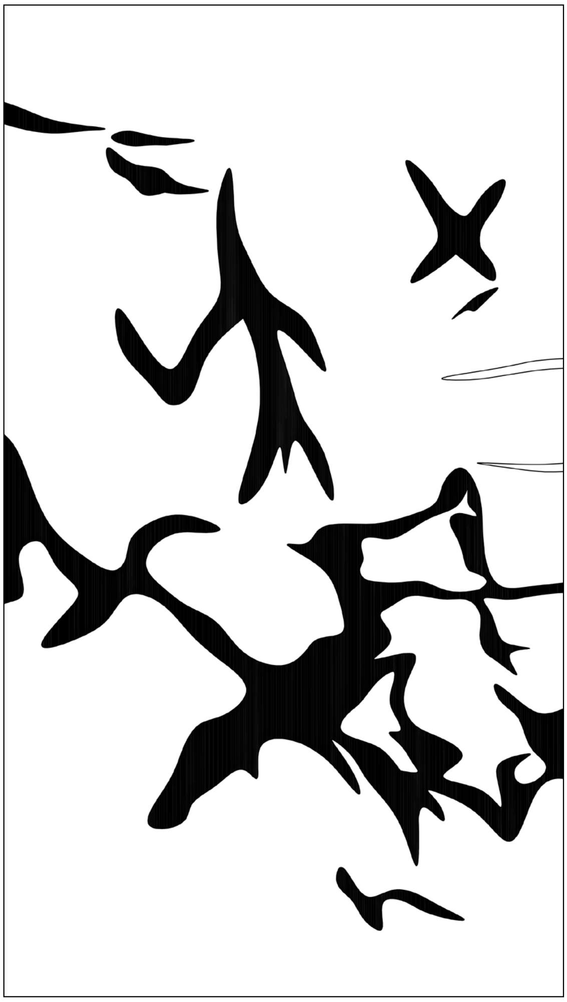


Fig. 4.25.16b Hunters

The figure is shown with a human in a standing posture with upward raised hands. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.17a-4.25.17b).

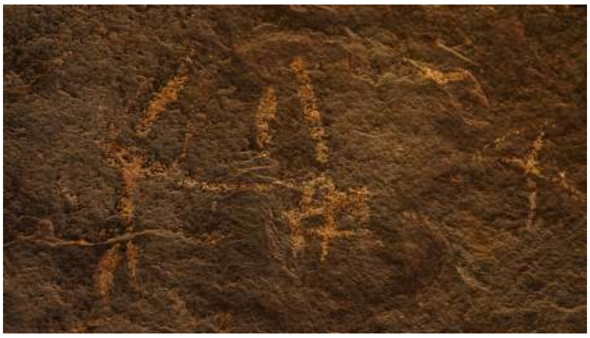


Fig. 4.25.17a Human with unidentified images

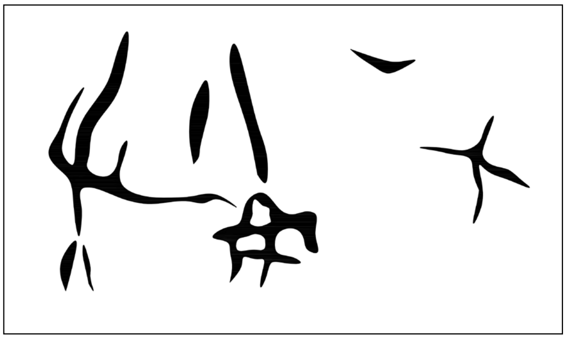


Fig. 4.25.17b Human with unidentified images

The human figure is shown in a standing posture. The human image is shown with raised hands. Nearby, images cannot be identified. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.18a-4.25.18b).

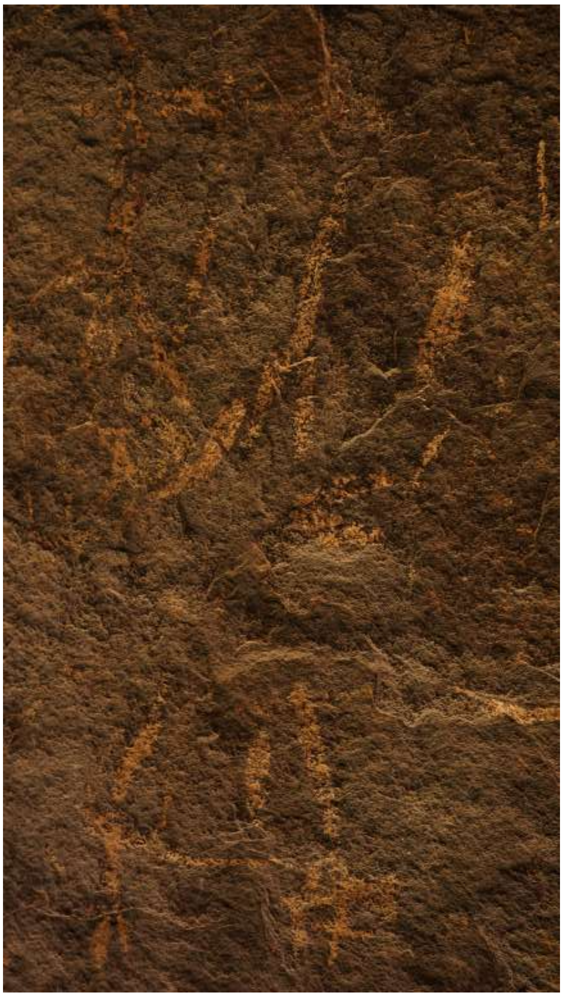


Fig. 4.25.18a Human with unidentified images

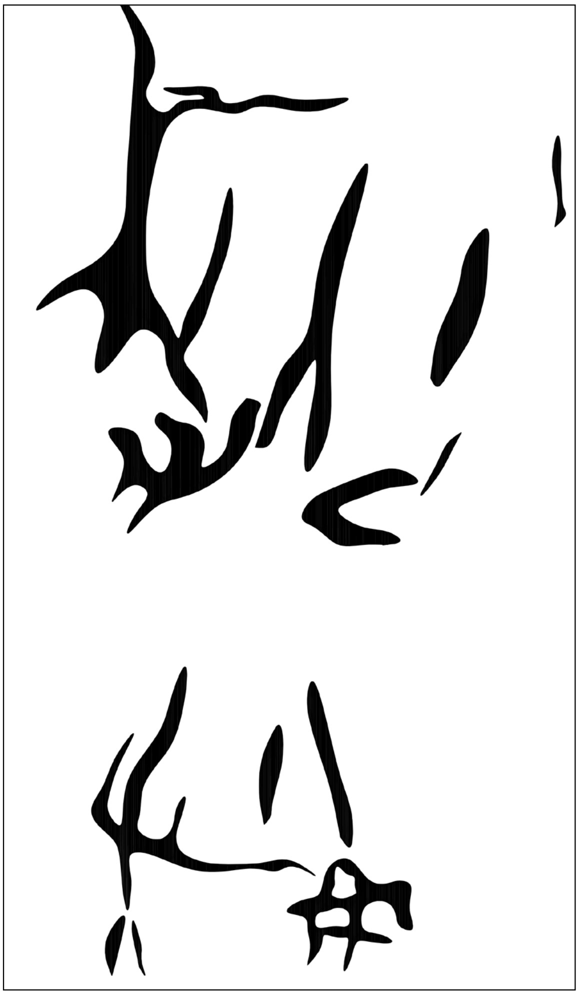


Fig. 4.25.18b Human with unidentified images

The figure is an inverted trident. All the three diagonal lines are having the same length and thickness. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.19a-4.25.19b).

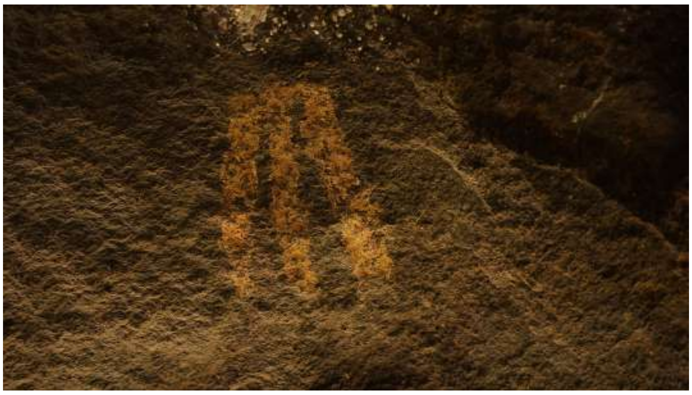


Fig. 4.25.19b Inverted trident

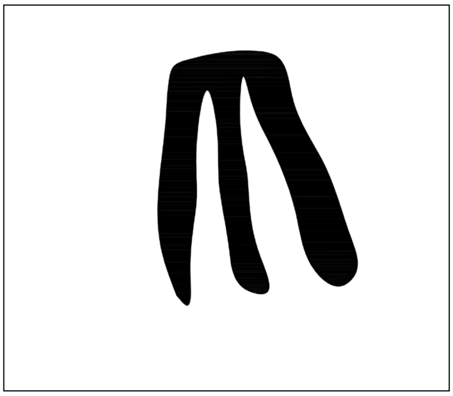


Fig. 4.25.19b Inverted trident

The figure appears like a trident. All the three diagonal lines are having the same length but the middle line is not attached to its base. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.20a-4.25.20b).

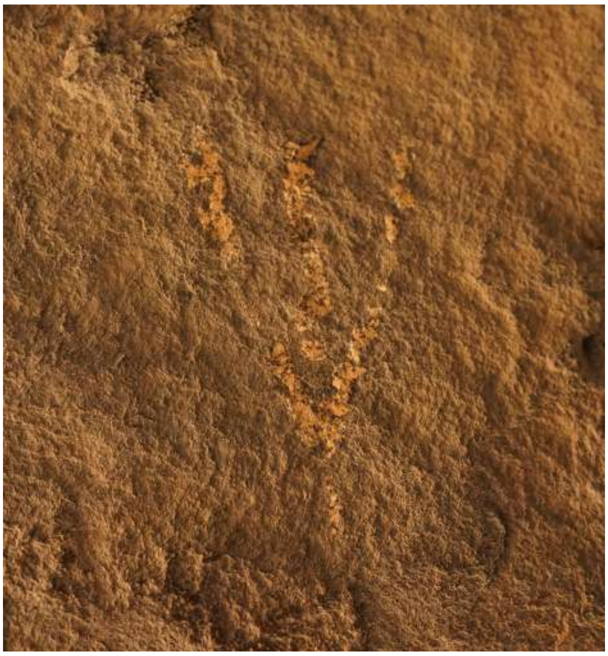


Fig. 4.25.20a Trident

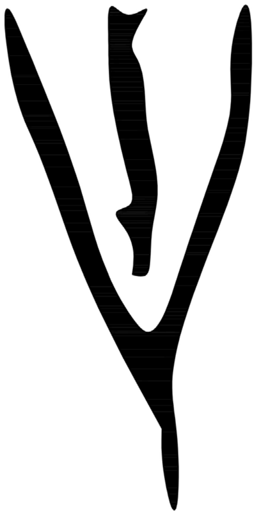


Fig. 4.25.20b Trident

The figure depicts a hunter holding a weapon in his right hand. The hunter is painted in a standing posture and the bottom area is not visible due to the faded condition. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.21a-4.25.21b).

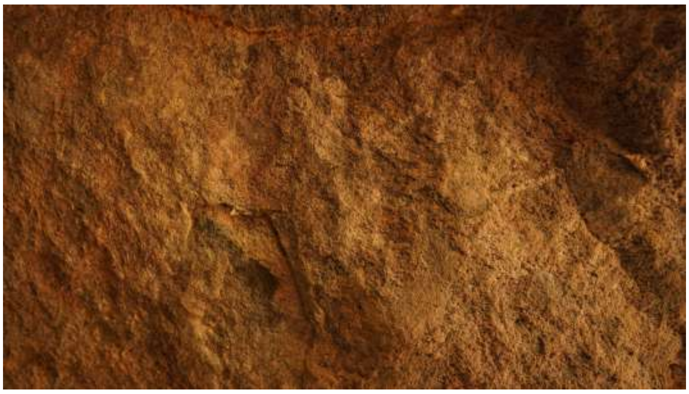


Fig. 4.25.21a Hunter holding an object

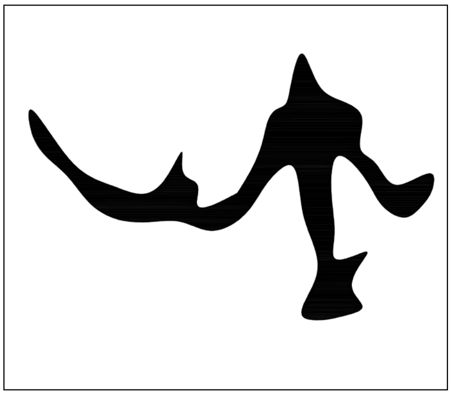


Fig. 4.25.21b Hunter holding an object

The figure depicts a hunter holding a weapon in his right hand. The hunter is painted in a standing posture and the bottom area is not visible due to the faded condition. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.21a-4.25.21b).

The figure depicts a human in a standing posture. The bottom and other features are not visible due to fading. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.25.22a-4.25.22b).

Fig. 4.25.22a *Human*

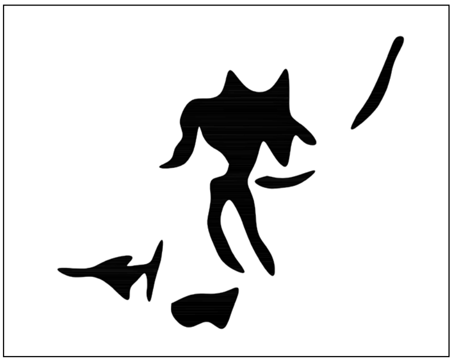


Fig. 4.25.22b *Human*

4.26. Kuruvikarankottai

The Kuruvikarankottai is a hamlet of Thalihalli (12.41953 N; 78.25920 E), and it lies on the Kaveripattinam-Velampatti road at a distance of 6 km to the north of Kaveripattinam and 5 km west of Velampatti. A small hill called Kuruvikarankottai hill is located about 2 km north of the village (Map 4.26.1-4.26.2). The hill contains several rock shelters. One of the shelters locally known as Kalyanagavi preserves some paintings executed in white on the walls and ceiling (Fig. 4.26.1-4.26.2).

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 4 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 6 m and the total height of the inclined surface is 5 m. The vertical face of the shelter is 4.30 m. The total painted area is 1.20x3.40 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

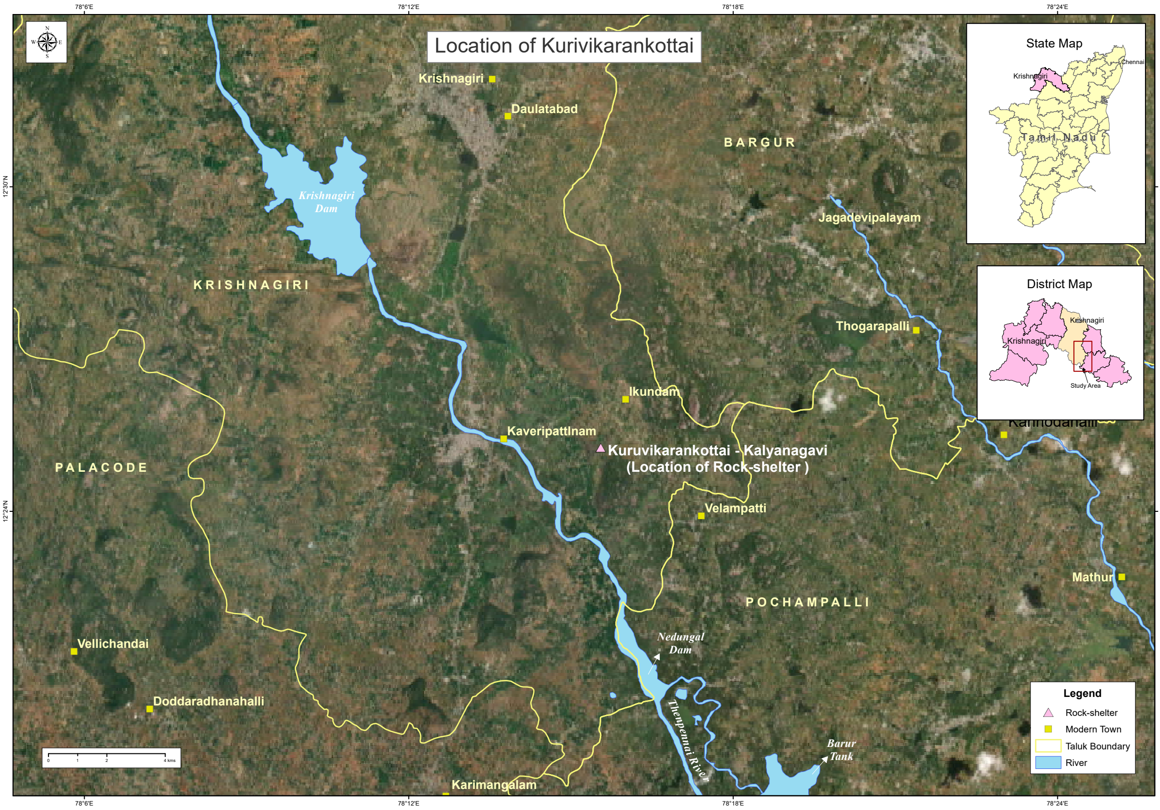
Description

Some paintings are painted in white on the rock near Negil Junai on the summit of Kuruvikaran hill. The site is suitable for temporary camping for 20 people. The paintings found here are simple line drawings.

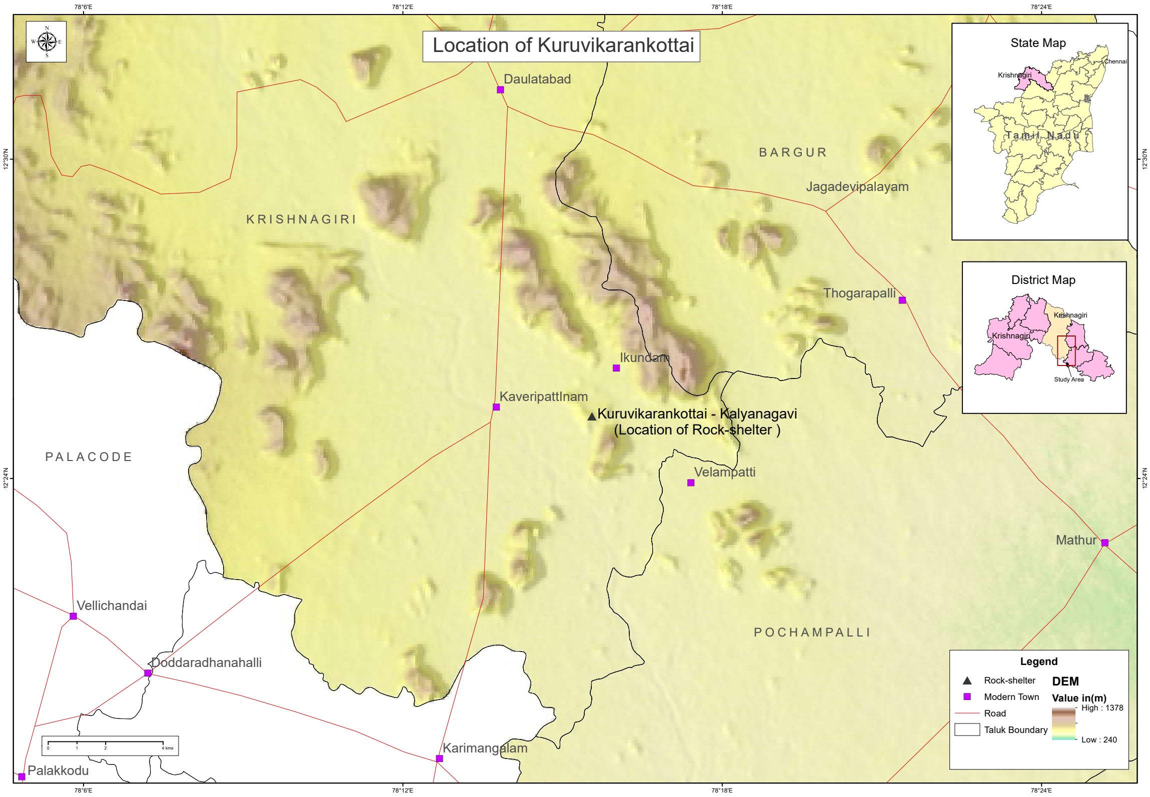
The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of human and animal, geometric signs, long horn animal, wheel, animal rider and humans could be seen in the Kuruvikarankottai paintings.

Panel Description

Starting from the top left there is an inverted human figure of stick fashion with an oval shaped head, short legs and long hands. Immediately to the right, there is a box fashioned with trident symbol in thick white colour. Below these two paintings, there is another probable a trident symbol, but based on the remnants of paintings below it suggests this could be a possible ithyphallic human figure. Immediately to the right there is another big human figure of thick in-filled in white painting with a circular head, lengthy body, raised hands, and legs in a step posture. At the juncture of the body and legs, it is shown that another human figure intersects. To the right of it, there is another human figure stick-like in white colour. The painting is quite heavily faded but the remnants of it are visible. Circular head, short legs and lengthy body standing near an animal figure which is also made of white pigment is evident.


Location of Kurivikarankottai
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Krishnagiri Dam
Jagadevipalayam
KRISHNAGIRI
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Kuruvikarankottai - Kalyanagavi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
PALACODE
Velampatti
Mathur
POCHAMPALLI
Nedungal Dam
Vellichandai
Doddaradhanahalli
Thenpennai River
Barur Tank
Karimangalam
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.26.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Kuruvikarankottai
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Jagadevipalayam
KRISHNAGIRI
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Kuruvikarankottai - Kalyanagavi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
PALACODE
Velampatti
Mathur
Vellichandai
POCHAMPALLI
Doddaradhanahalli
Karimangalam
Palakkodu
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.26.2 Location of the rock shelter

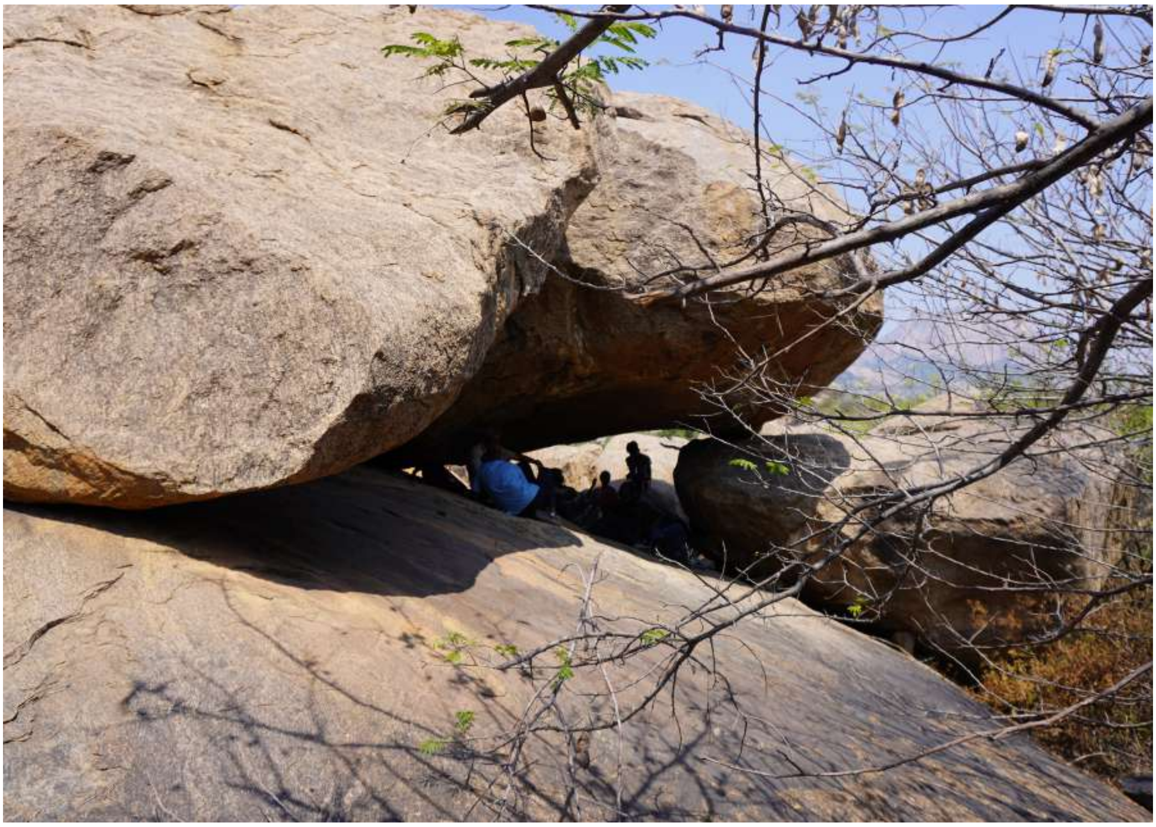


Fig. 4.26.1 General view of the rock shelter

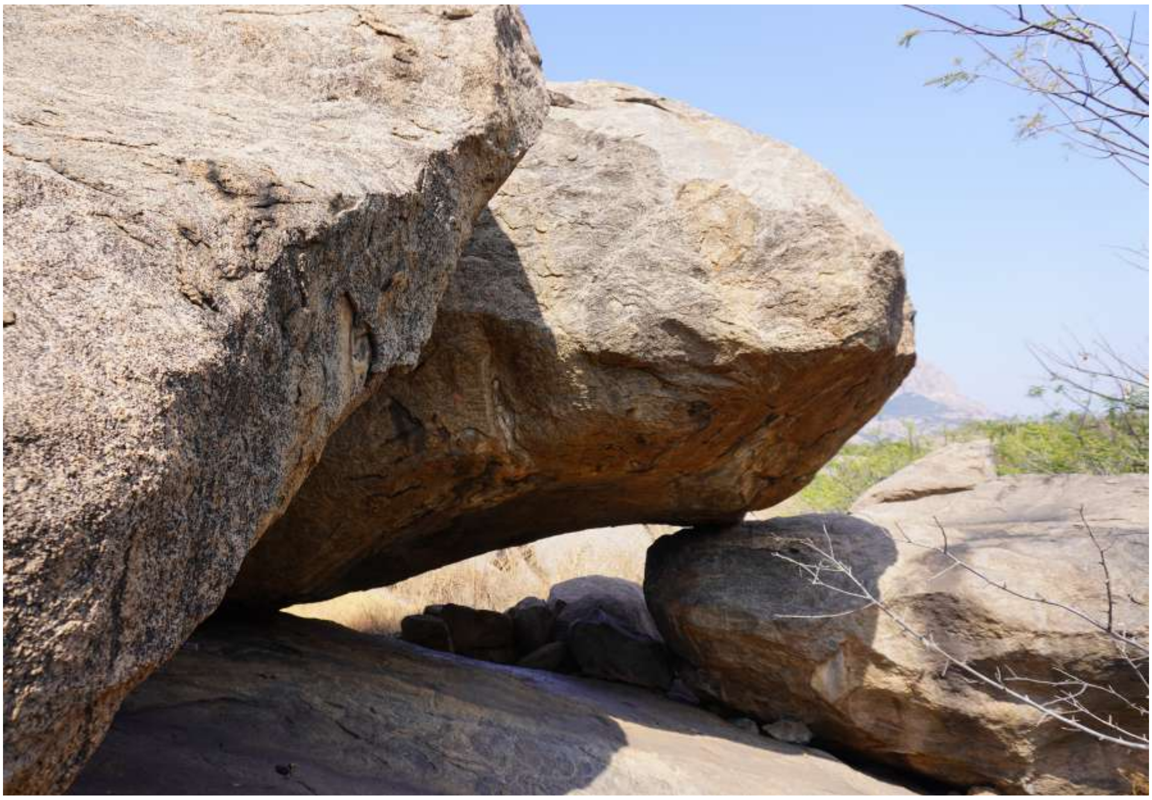


Fig. 4.26.2 General view of the rock shelter

Immediately to the right of it, a huge stick fashion human figure with a circular head is seen. The ends of both hands are shown with a circular imitation of a probable palm or holding an object. Also, this painting resembles an ithyphallic human figure, with a bird sitting on the left shoulder. At the centre of the panel, there is a circular symbol with a dot at the centre in white (Fig. 4.26.3a-4.26.3b).

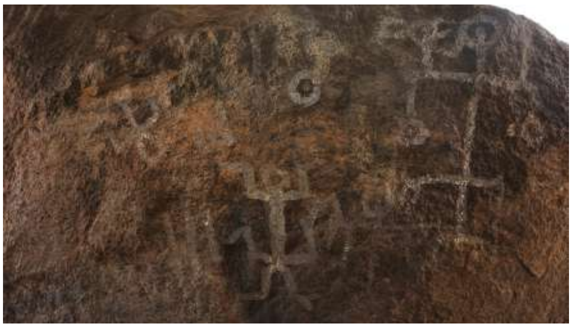


Fig. 4.26.3a Humans and animal

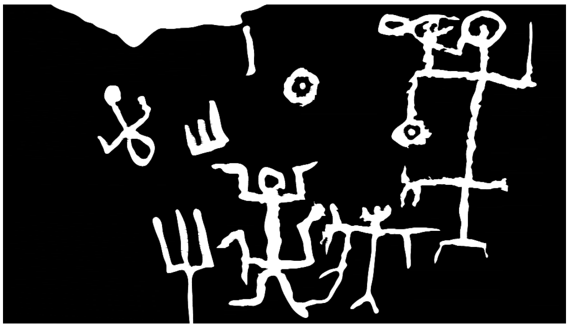


Fig. 4.26.3b Humans and animal

Immediately right of it (which?), there is another huge white human figure depicted in thick in-filled fashion with a circular head, lengthy body, raised hands, and legs of step posture. At the juncture of the body and legs, it is shown that another human figure is shown intersecting. Right of it there is another human figure of a stick fashioned in white paintings. The painting is highly faded but remnants of it are yet visible. White ochre represents a geometric symbol/design (Fig. 4.26.4a-4.26.4b).

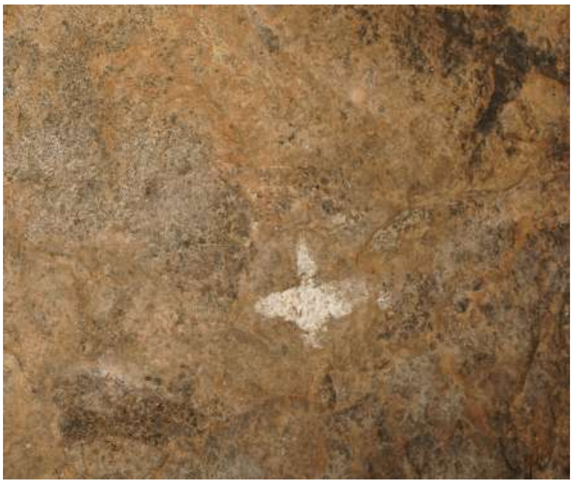


Fig. 4.26.4a Geometric sign

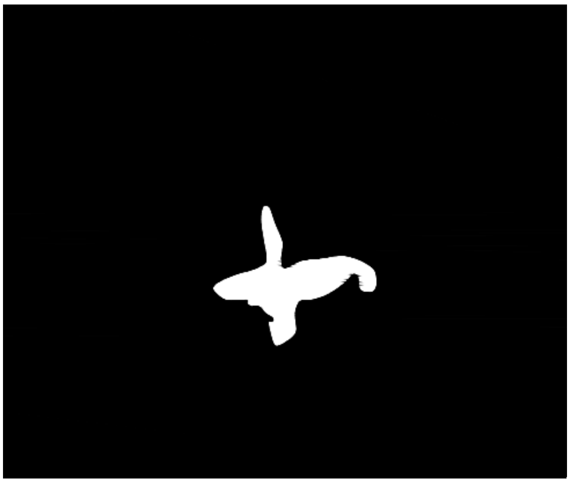
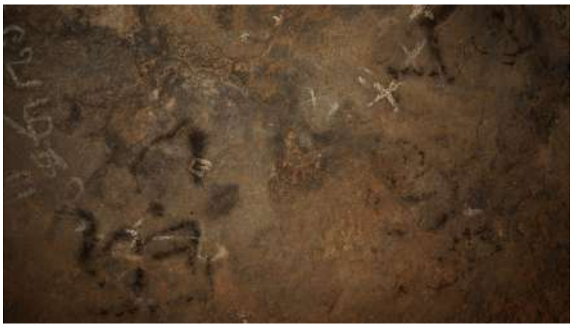


Fig. 4.26.4b Geometric sign

This panel consist of paintings in black and white. Both the pigments are very barely visible therefore many of them are unidentified. On the left side of the image, one can witness the evidence of vandalism by means of graffiti. The black paintings are mostly of animal figures. At the centre of the image here is a white painting representing a geometric symbol/design of a square with a horizontal line cutting it. Further right of it, there are instances of completely faded unidentified white paintings (Fig. 4.26.5a-4.26.5b).



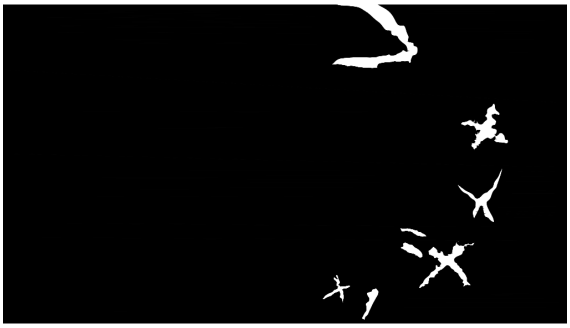
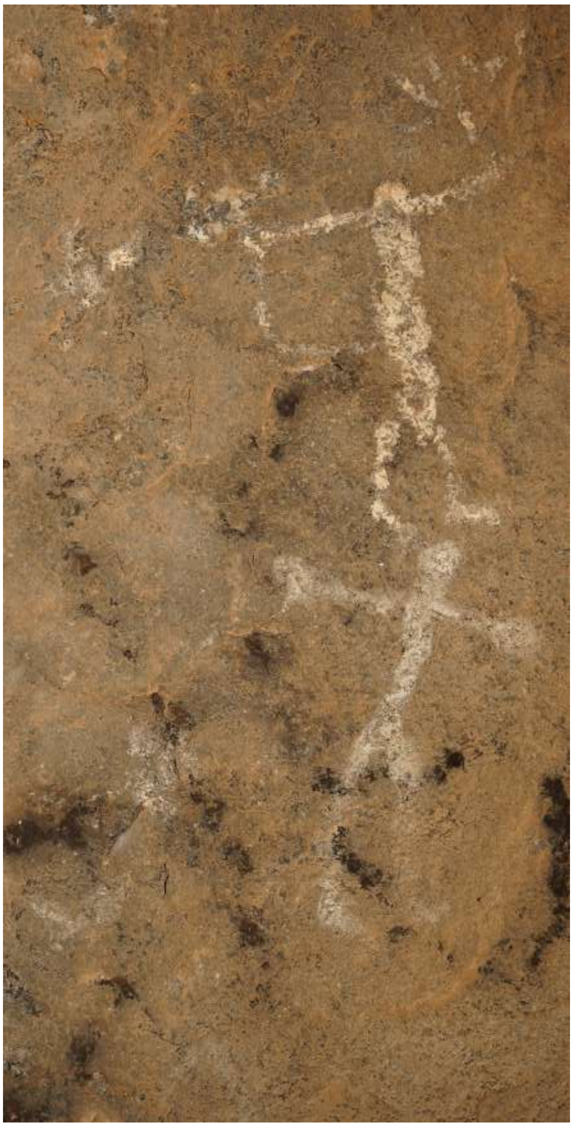


Fig. 4.26.5a Geometric sign

Fig. 4.26.5b Geometric sign

Two anthropomorphic forms of humans were shown in standing posture one above the other in the panel. The image at the top is holding a trident in his left arm and an unidentified object in his other hand. The image at the bottom is in a standing posture and the hands are outstretched. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.26.6a-4.26.6b).



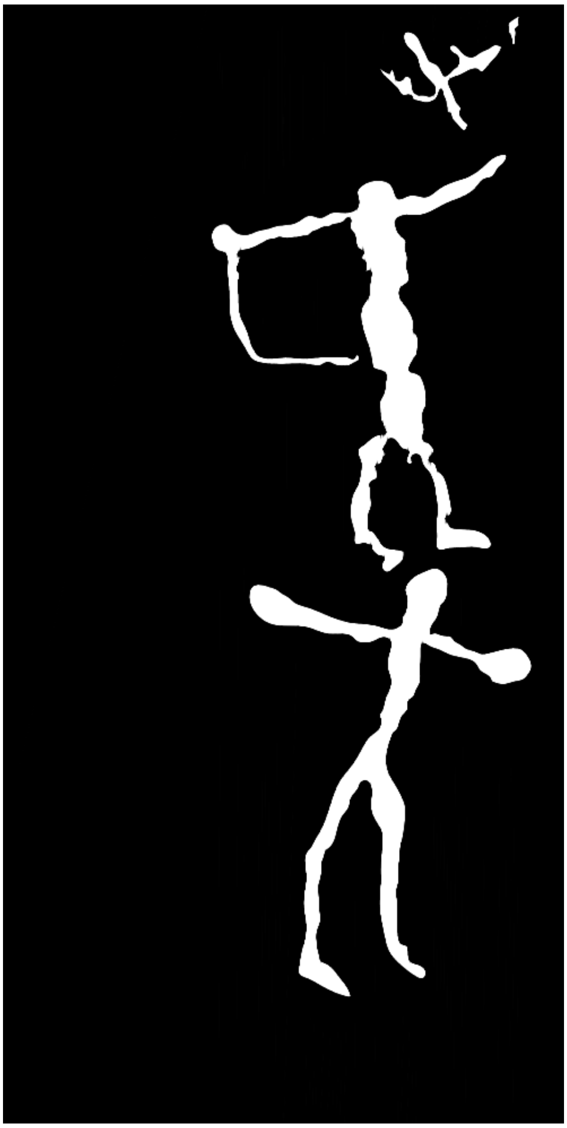


Fig. 4.26.6a Human

Fig. 4.26.6b Human

At the centre of the image, there is a geometric symbol/design of a square with a horizontal line cutting it (Fig. 4.26.7a-4.26.7b).

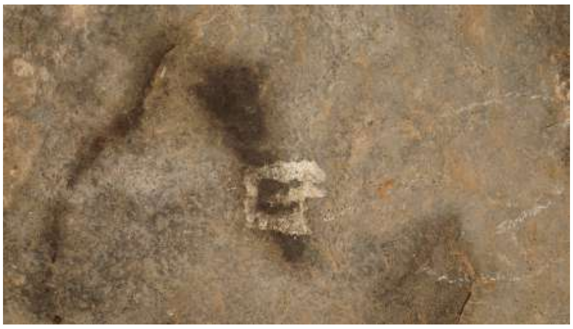


Fig. 4.26.7a Geometric square box

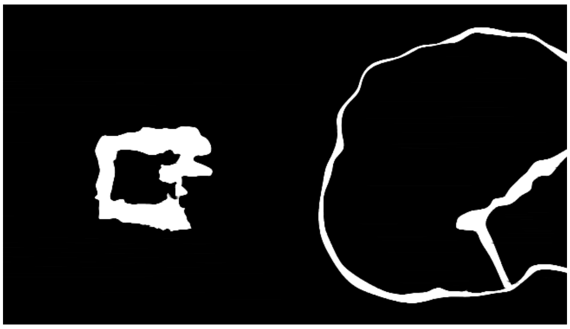


Fig. 4.26.7b Geometric square box

The image is a human figure. The hands are outstretched. The bottom paintings are in faded condition. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.26.8a-4.26.8b).

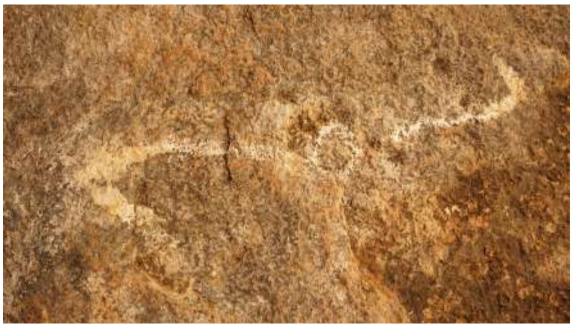


Fig. 4.26.8a Unidentified figure

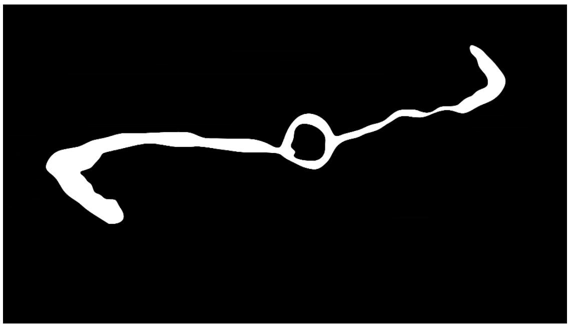


Fig. 4.26.8b Unidentified figure

The image is showing a stick form of a human. The hands are outstretched and the fingers are not shown or faded. At the bottom, a geometric form of a cross sign is observed. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.26.9a-4.26.9b).

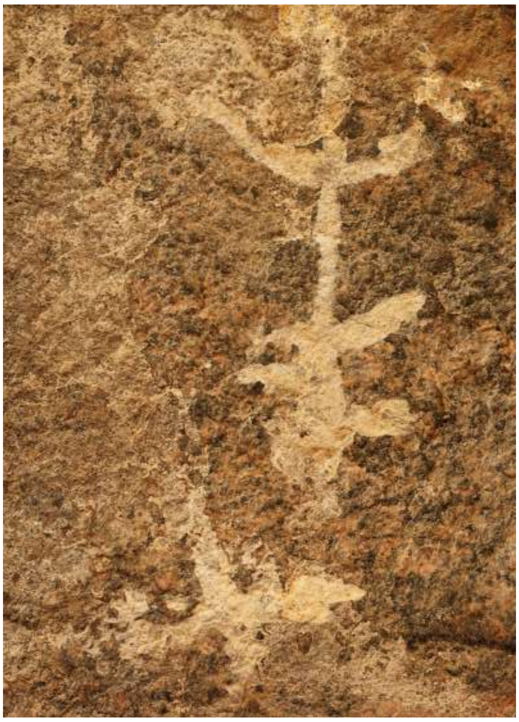


Fig. 4.26.9a Human

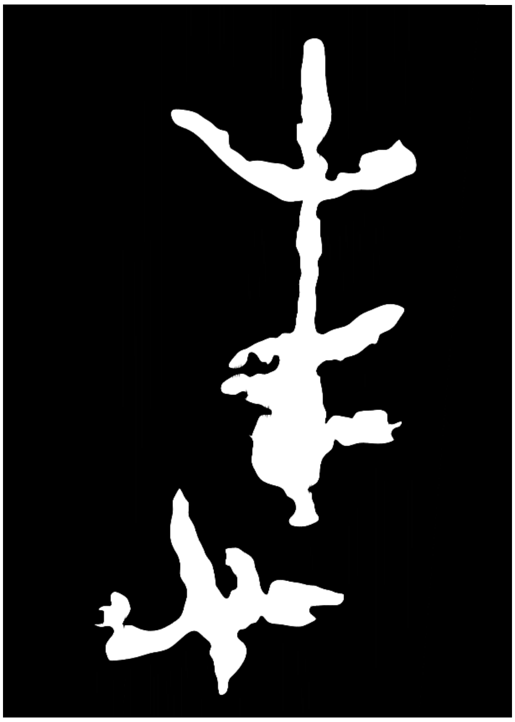


Fig. 4.26.9b Human

The image is showing an animal. The front portion of the animal is drawn with the head and horn and the first two legs are visible. The horns look like deer and its mouth is also similar to deer. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.26.10a-4.26.10b).

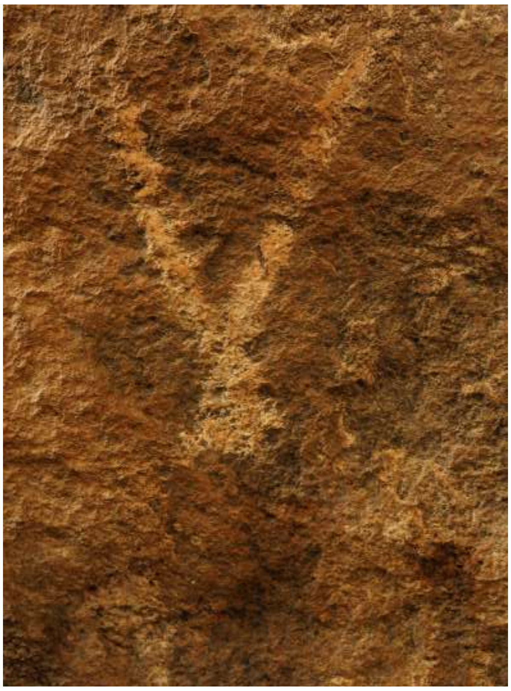


Fig. 4.26.10a Long horn animal

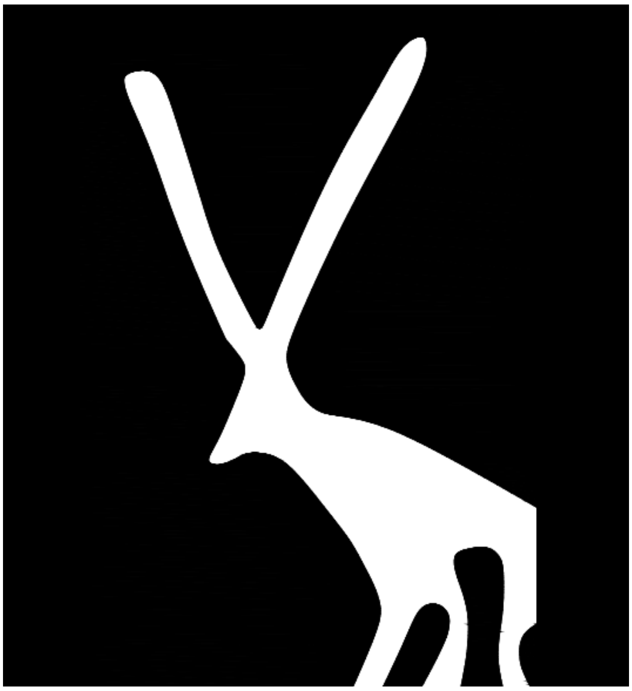


Fig. 4.26.10b Long horn animal

The image is showing a fighting scene. A hunter mounted on an animal holds a weapon. Two people are attached to the hunter. All of them are holding weapons indicating conflict. They hold weapons like a sword and shield. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.26.11a-4.26.11b).

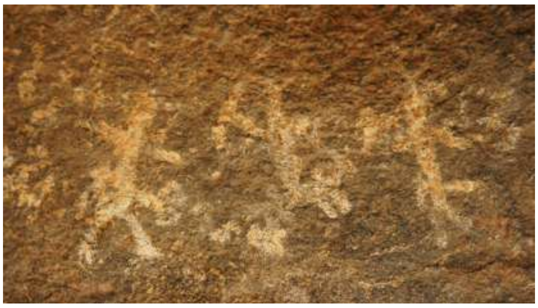


Fig. 4.26.11a Human

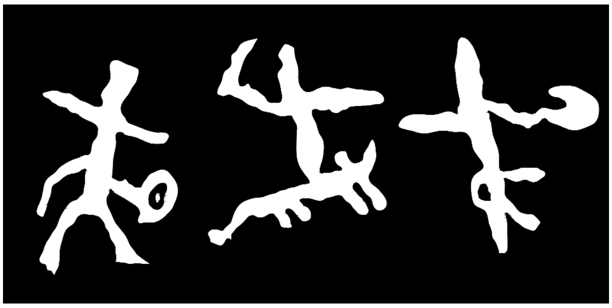
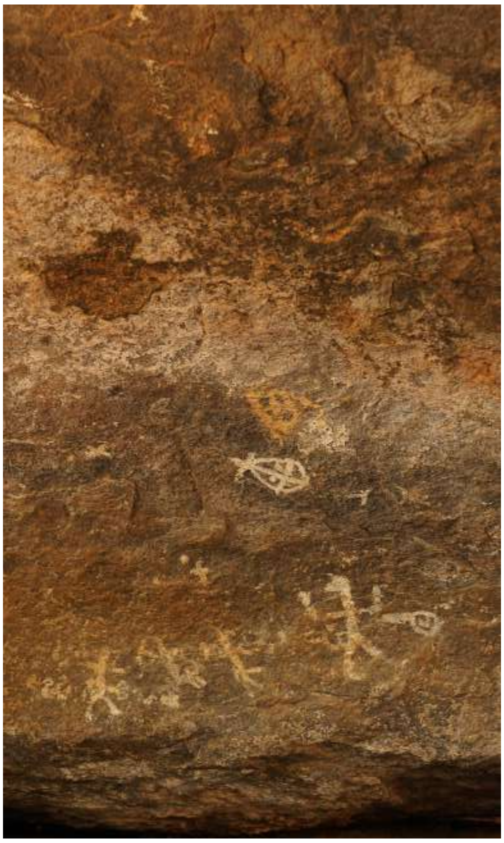


Fig. 4.26.11b Human

At the top, two geometric forms of wheel signs are painted. An elliptical at the its centre, two cross lines intersect. In each of the quadrants there is a dot. The colour of the painting is white and red. At the bottom, four people are shown in a standing posture. In which, a hunter is shown seated on an animal. The other two men are walking in front of the hunter and their hands are in an extended form. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.26.12a-4.26.12b).



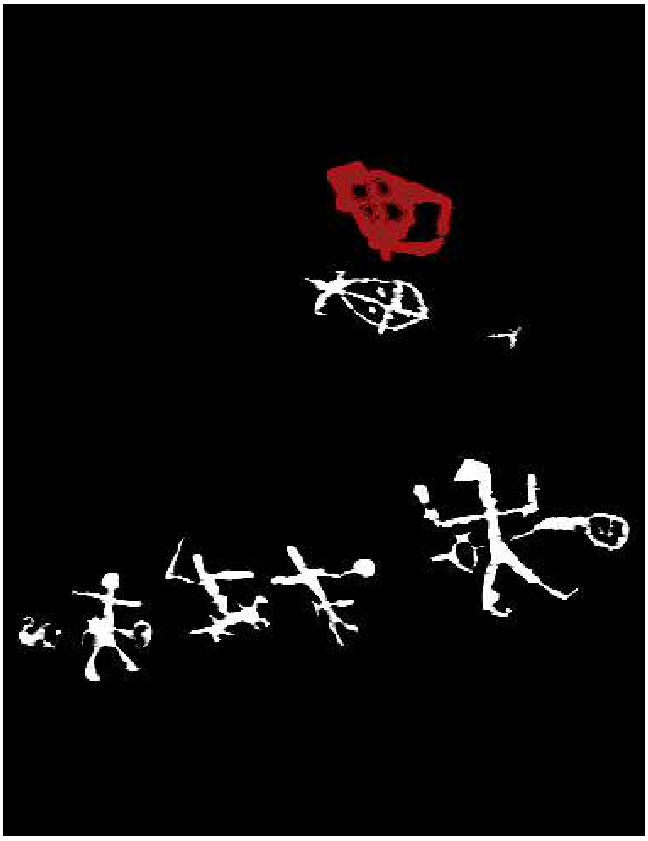
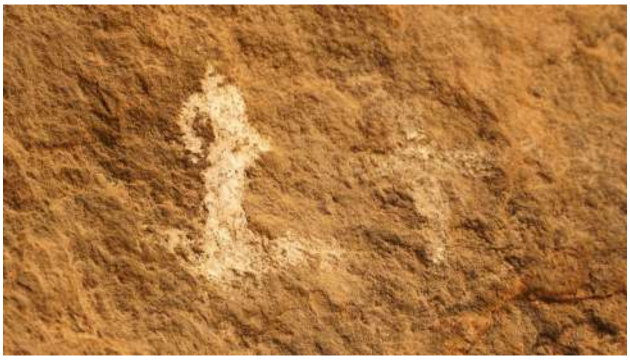


Fig. 4.26.12a *Animal rider, human and wheel*

Fig. 4.26.12b *Animal rider, human and wheel*

The image shows a human figure filled in white. To the right of its a cross symbol is evident (Fig. 4.26.13a-4.26.13b).



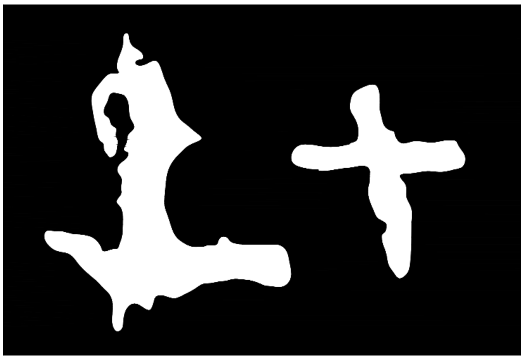
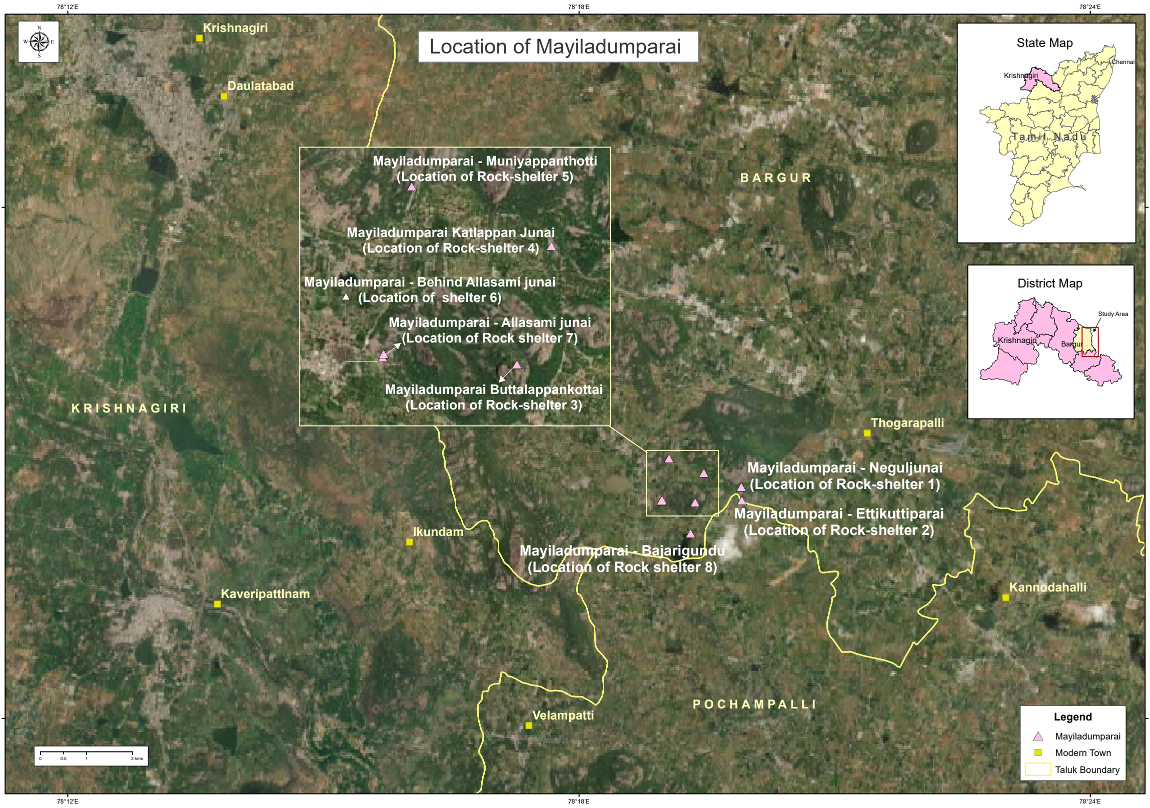


Fig. 4.26.13a *Anthropomorphic form*

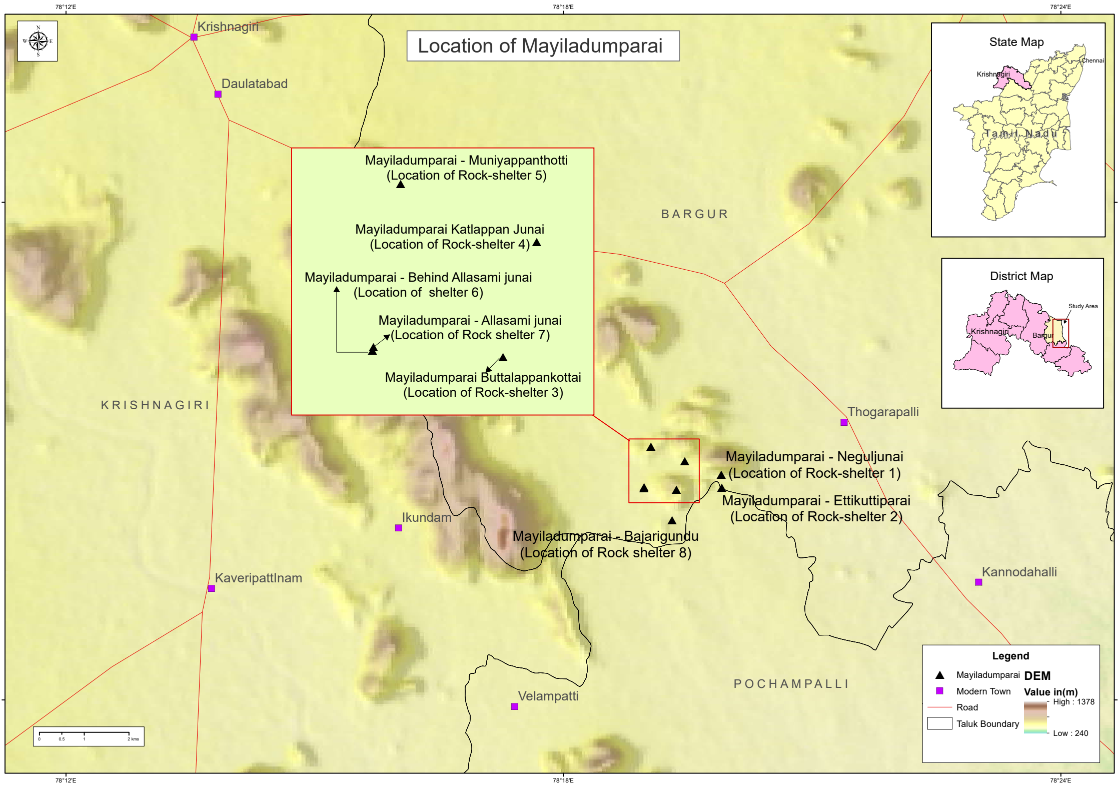
Fig. 4.26.13b *Anthropomorphic form*

4.27. Mayiladumparai

Mayiladumparai (12. 44529 N; 78.33173E) is a small hamlet located at the foothill about 4 km to the west of Togarapalli village in Krishnagiri district of Dharmapuri region (Map 4.27.1-4.27.2). The hillock Mayiladumparai means "peacock dancing on a rock" (*mayil*=peacock + *adum*=dancing + *parai*=rock) and the name is obviously derived from the abundance of peacocks living on this hillock which has a plateau surface on top (Fig. 4.27.1). The intensive archaeological explorations carried out in 9600 sq.m. area of Dharmapuri region yielded rich data ranging from microlithic to medieval period. K. Rajan discovered a number of archaeological sites and documented them bringing to the fore the archaeological significance of the site in 1989 (Narasimhaiah 1980; Raman 1977-78:50; Rajan 1991:37-52, 1997:125-195).


Location of Mayiladumparai
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Mayiladumparai - Muniyappanthotti (Location of Rock-shelter 5)
Mayiladumparai Katlappan Junai (Location of Rock-shelter 4)
Mayiladumparai - Behind Allasami junai (Location of shelter 6)
Mayiladumparai - Allasami junai (Location of Rock shelter 7)
Mayiladumparai Buttalappankottai (Location of Rock-shelter 3)
BARGUR
KRISHNAGIRI
Thogarapalli
Mayiladumparai - Neguljunai (Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Mayiladumparai - Ettikuttiparai (Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Mayiladumparai - Bajarigundu (Location of Rock shelter 8)
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Kannodahalli
POCHAMPALLI
Velampatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
District Map
Study Area
Bargur
Legend
Mayiladumparai
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.27.1 Location of Mayiladumparai


Location of Mayiladumparai
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Mayiladumparai - Muniyappanthotti (Location of Rock-shelter 5)
Mayiladumparai Katlappan Junai (Location of Rock-shelter 4)
Mayiladumparai - Behind Allasami junai (Location of shelter 6)
Mayiladumparai - Allasami junai (Location of Rock shelter 7)
Mayiladumparai Buttalappankottai (Location of Rock-shelter 3)
BARGUR
KRISHNAGIRI
Thogarapalli
Mayiladumparai - Neguljunai (Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Mayiladumparai - Ettikuttiparai (Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Mayiladumparai - Bajarigundu (Location of Rock shelter 8)
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Kannodahalli
POCHAMPALLI
Velampatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Mayiladumparai
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.27.1 Location of Mayiladumparai

Regional History

The famous medieval period Jagadevi fort lies about 6 km west of Mayiladumparai and the famous Neolithic tool production centre Kappalavadi is located about 7 km north of the site. The archaeological explorations conducted in Dharmapuri region by Rajan in 1989 brought to light 2 Palaeolithic sites, 5 Neolithic sites and 170 Iron Age sites and a large number of historical sites. In addition, ten sites with rock paintings and about 125 memorial stones belonging to early medieval times were also discovered (Rajan 1991a:51-70; Rajan 2000:138-189). Among them, Mayiladumparai is one of the important sites of this region with cultural material ranging from Microlithic to Early Historic times. The geological, geomorphological and geographical settings of the area favoured the beginning of early settlements and sustaining of the human occupation over the years.

This site is one among many archaeological sites of the region, such as Togarapalli, Gangavaram, Sandur, Vedarthattakkal, Guttur, Gidlur, Sappamutlu and Kappalavadi. B.Narasimhaiah conducted a trial excavation in 1980 at a habitation-cum-burial site Togarapalli yielding 20 cm thick cultural deposit with Neolithic pottery like coarse red ware, tan ware, brown ware, grey ware and black ware (Narasimhaiah 1980:29-40). This site also met with 15 memorial stones (Rajan 1977:166-167). The site Gangavaram lies 3 km from Sandur yielded nearly 50 cairn circles entombing cist burial and four memorial stones. Gidlur situated 1 km before Togarapalli is encountered with more than 100 cairn circles. At Kappalavadi, B.Narasimhaiah collected hand axe, ovate, chopper, chopper-chopping tool, miniature hand axe, awl-cum-scraper, hammer stone, wedge, blade flake and a cylindrical core made on dolerite with heavy patination. B.Narasimhaiah designated these tools to pre-Neolithic stone industry (Narasimhaiah 1980:19-31). Subsequent exploration by the author dated these materials to Middle Paleolithic times taking into account of the identical tools discovered at Varatanapalli in Krishnagiri taluk of the same district (Rajan 1977:167). Another site Sappamuttlu lies about 5 km from Togarapalli-kut road yielded more than hundred cairn circles. Vedarthattakkal, an important site, lies on the Krishnagiri - Pochchampalli road at a distance of 13 km from Krishnagiri has habitation found at two places, one at the foothill and another on the hillock near the perennial pond. The earlier mound yielded black and red ware, red ware and red slipped ware. The latter mound yielded a dull coarse red ware. The Iron Age monuments are found all around the village with much concentration towards the hill. The famous Sandur Vatteluttu memorial stones, presently housed in the Tamil State Archaeology Department Museum at Dharmapuri, are found at the foothill. The site Sandur and Vedarthattakkal may be considered as a single unit for the purpose of understanding the site settings. All the above vatteluttu inscriptions are dated to 7th - 8th century CE (Nagasamy 1975; Pungundran 1989; Rajan 1997).

Thus, one may reasonably presume that Mayiladumparai is ideally situated in the midst of contemporary sites and it is suited for the continuous occupation from Microlithic times to Early Historic period. There are more than 2000 Iron Age burials, three rock shelters with paintings, nearly 20 perennial ponds and 30 memorial stones,

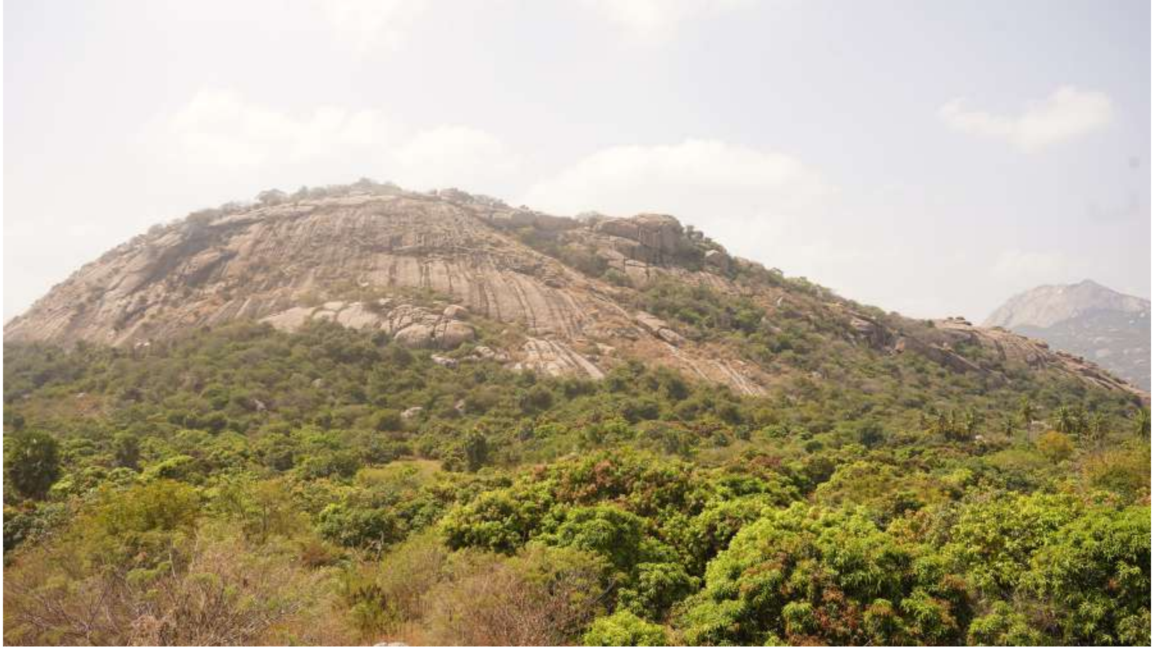


Fig. 4.27.1 General view of Mayiladumparai hillock

all fall within the radius of 10 km. This emphasizes the potentiality of the region in which the present site Mayiladumparai is situated.

The site is embedded with four distinctive cultural deposits ranging from Microlithic times to Early Historical period. The rock shelters located at different altitudes around this site had engravings and paintings executed with white and red pigments. The rock shelters, habitation mounds and the adjoining burial complexes cover an area of more than 40 hectares. The settlement yielding microlithic tools is observed in one of the shelters. Another rock shelter yielding Neolithic habitation deposit in association with rock engravings is found on the eastern end of the hillock Sanarappanmalai. The important habitation mound called *karuvottuppallam* yielding both Neolithic and Iron Age ceramics is found on the left bank of the rivulet Talapallam and at the foothill of Sanarppanmalai. The habitation mounds are found in patches on flat surface encircled with big boulders.

The long survival of the site with the pastoral economy could be attributed to the presence of a large number of perennial ponds. The people living in surrounding areas, even today, depend heavily on these ponds. During prehistoric times, this would have been still in better condition and sustained the needs of the Neolithic, Iron Age and Early Historic settlers.

Excavations

The cultural remains encountered at Mayiladumparai indicate the existence of various subsistence patterns and it covers a wider area (Rajan 2004:74-89). The rock-shelters with microlithic remains occupy on the western part of the site. Neolithic remains are found at two levels. One in the rock-shelter found at the top of the hillock Sanarappanmalai and another in the Karuvottuppallam at the foothill. The Iron Age habitational deposit is found in Karuvottuppallam area and the burial is spread out in the south and southeastern part of the site. To understand each of the cultural remains in its own settings, a systematic excavation is conducted at different locations. In total, five trenches and an Iron Age burial are opened by K.Rajan of Tamil University in the year 2003. The first trench is laid in the rock-shelter to identify the nature of the microlithic deposit. The second trench is laid in the rock-shelter located on the top of the hillock. The remaining three trenches are laid at the foothill of Sanarappanmalai locally called *Karuvottuppallam*. The five trenches and an Iron Age burial yielded cultural deposit ranging from Microlithic times to the Early Historic period hopscotches (Rajan, et. al., 2004:74-89).

The explorations conducted in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 met with a few more archaeological vestiges. Among them grinding grooves are so important. Grooves on the bed rock close to water bodies and rock-shelter with paintings are found and documented. Another 16 grinding grooves are noticed on bedrock northwest of Mayiladumparai hillock and about 20 meters northeast of Talapallam valley. A rock shelter with paintings namely Ettikuttiparai located extreme west of Mayiladumparai hillock is reported a fresh. The rock art with white pigment represents three human and two animal figures possibly a horse.

The encouraging results of the previous excavations and impressive data obtained in subsequent explorations led the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology to re-excavate the site in the years 2021 and 2022. This hillock Sanarappanmalai is divided into five localities, according to the surface findings and rock shelters for the systematic excavation. Each cultural aspect is dealt separately to understand its nature.

Microlithic Culture

The rock-shelter, called *Kucikundu*, located on the southern side of the Tenbol hillock is selected for excavation in 2003 as it was less disturbed and showed a considerable amount of habitation deposit. The shelter measures 15 m on a horizontal plane and 5 m on a vertical plane and is about 4-5 m deep from the entrance. The initial goal of the selection of the rock-shelter is to see if there is any human occupation during the prehistoric times, particularly during the Neolithic. Quite interestingly, it yielded more than a meter single cultural deposit belonging to Microlithic period. A meter square trench laid on the cave floor at the centre of the shelter yielded one-meter undisturbed light brown compact thick deposit containing microlithic tools found in association with bones. The excavated material is analyzed for various archaeo-metric forms, associated objects and by-products. The finished forms and the associated objects are presented here, ignoring the by-products which run into a few thousands. Systematic removal of blades from a core produced the distinctively fluted surface, most characteristic of blade cores (Fig. 4.27.2). The solitary piece of a chert stands as fine testimony to this technique. Several retouched blade forms are present at Mayiladumparai. To date, no microscopic analysis of the tools has been made and their specific purpose remains to be identified. The tools recovered from the site are classified into blades, points, borers, burins, lunates and scrapers based on their techno-morphic characters. Among them, blades, points and borers are dominant tool types. Lunates have limited occurrence. The crystalline stone variously termed as quartzite or vein quartz is the most common material used at this site, except a solitary example of a chert. The quartz source materials are available in the form of veins in rocks. A big quartz vein measuring more than a meter wide is observed in the rock adjacent to the rock-shelter namely *Kucikundu*.

Prehistoric evidence from Dharmapuri region is limited (Narasimhaiah 1980; Rajan 1997). This is the first microlithic site so far reported in this region. The presence of a large number of finished tools along with a few thousand by-products from a square meter area makes the site one of the richest known Microlithic sites of Dharmapuri region. The availability of the geometric and non-geometric tools from a 100 cm cultural deposit suggests its long occupation.

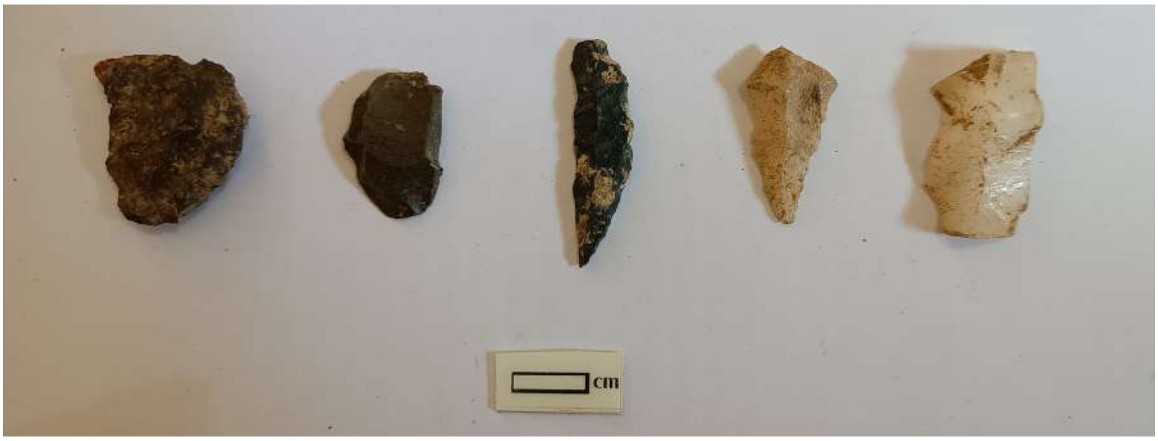


Fig. 4.27.2 Microlithic tools

Neolithic Culture

The remains of the Neolithic culture are found in two different geographical settings at this site. The first one is noticed in the rock-shelter located on the top of the Sanarappanmalai and the second one is observed as a cultural deposit below Iron Age phase in the habitation mound found at the foothill locally called *karuvottuppallam*. The shift in the Neolithic settlement is reflected in the cultural material too. The material remains exposed in the rock-shelter suggest an earlier date. It seems the Neolithic people first settled and lived in rock-shelters and later on moved over to the plain as sequential change in their subsistence pattern. The former settlers would have depended more on the cattle raising as the shelter lies on the top of the hill and hardly there is any scope for any agricultural activities and latter would have lived upon both cattle raising and rudimentary agriculture.

Excavation at the Rock-shelter

There are numerous rock-shelters found on the southern slope of the hillock Sanarappanmalai. One of the rock-shelters, locally called *Mettakam* lies below vilakkuvachchakundu, facing south yielded Neolithic deposit. The shelter had a flat base and a semi-circular top ceiling. It measures 9.20 m in length and 3.15 m in breadth and had a total height of 1.40 m. One of the interesting features of the shelter is the presence of the three rock-engravings that found engraved deeply at the entrance. Such engravings were reported earlier at Edakkal in Kerala (Gurukkal and Raghava Varier 1999:85-95) and at Perumukkal (Rajan 1997:304) in Tamil Nadu. The careful excavation carried out inside the shelter yielded 85 cm cultural deposit. The notable cultural material that unearthed in the rock-shelter is handmade red ware.

Excavation at Habitation mound

In total, three trenches were laid in the habitation on the left bank of the stream Talapallam in the year 2003 (Locality-1) and in 2021 and 2022, Locality-2 is spotted in a rock shelter, after a sudden steep, right below Vilakkuvachchakundu. The Trench-01 laid in the shelter met with fine black-and-red ware, black slipped ware and red ware. Locality-3 is located on next lower level of the open slope with a flat surface right below the rock shelter (Locality-2). The slope is highly surrounded and guarded with rocks and boulders as a natural barrier to the settlers. Two trenches were laid 100 meters apart. Locality-4 is another flat ground located a meter below rocky surface running in east-west orientation parallel to Locality-3. Three trenches were laid in this locality. Locality-5 is found at the foot hill, it is an important habitation mound located on the left bank of a stream flowing through a small valley (Talapaallam) which is lying between Sanarappanmalai and Mayiladumparai. The western slope of Sanarappanmalai formed to be a valley with the adjacent hillock called Kaurethi, located close to village Ikundham. The southern slope of the hillock Kaurethi leads to the habitation mound with plenty of potsherds found on the surface. Katlappanparai a cluster of boulders to form this small mound contains a rock shelter and a grinding groove. The entire habitation mound is labelled as Locality–6 and proper grid system is followed to layout the trenches. The trench laid in *Kucikundu* rock-shelter is considered as Locality-7. Thus, twelve trenches in seven localities were laid mainly to identify the possible relation between the Neolithic groove and the settlement and also to comprehend the rock art and rock shelters associated with Neolithic period. Further, the excavation was intended to identify continuation of settlement and the precise cultural conception of the megalithic builders in the nearby area.

Iron Age Culture

Burial Complex

The impressive burial complex of about 1000 burials is distributed in 40 hectares (100 acres) of the undulated rocky terrain dissected with numerous water bodies. The burials locally called as pandavar kuddai or panduvarar kuddai consist of cairn circles enclosing cist burial capped with a huge capstone. Most of the burials are cairn-circles. In a few of them, cist is partially exposed due to the removal of the cairn packing by the cultivators of the field. In the year 2003, a cist burial was opened. Subsequently in the year 2021 and 2022, another 15 graves were opened. The burial complex is divided into Locality-1 and Locality-2. The graves found in the southern foothills of the Sanarappanmalai are labelled as Locality-1 and the one found 2 km south of Locality-1 is labelled as Locality-2. In Locality-1 five pit and five cist burials covered with heavy capstone were opened. In Locality-2, five cist burials were opened (Figs. 4.27.3-4.27.11).

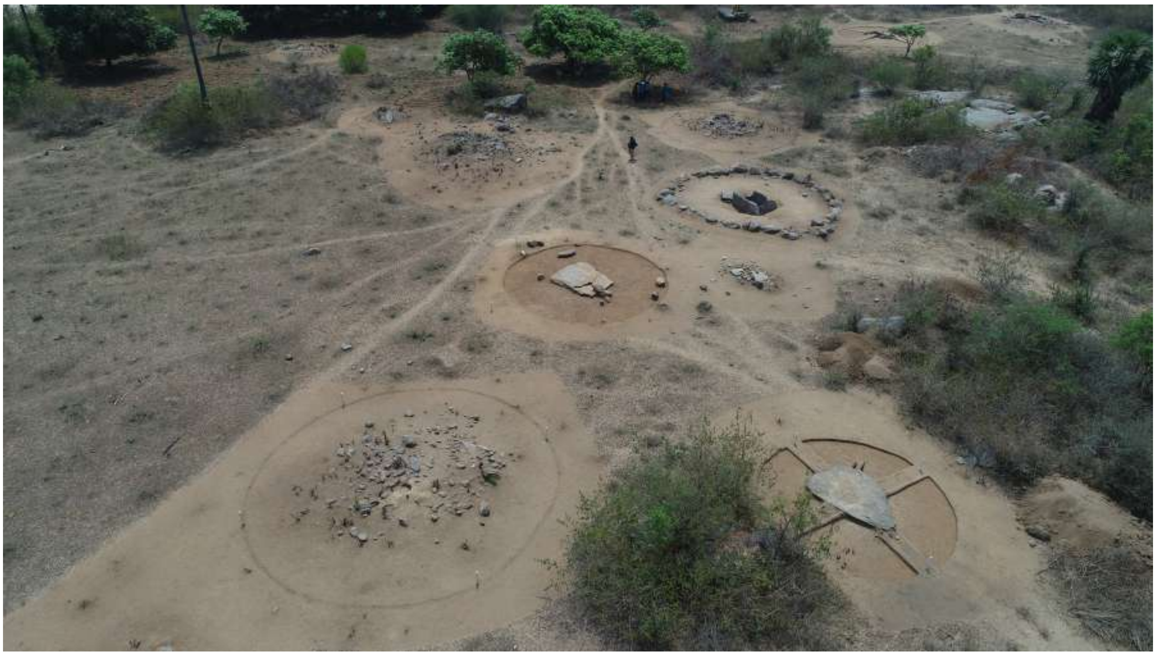


Fig. 4.27.3 General view of the graves

Features of the graves

The types of burial, nature and placement of grave goods associated with a particular type of graves and its locational aspects within a burial complex provide a clue on the chronological frame of the burial complex. There are two major types of graves namely pit burial and chamber tombs. The pit burials are found close to the habitation mound on the southern side of the Sanarappanmalai where one came across the Neolithic vestiges, rock shelter with paintings, grinding grooves and early Iron Age culture. Whereas the cist burials observed little away from the Neolithic and Iron Age settlements. The close analysis of the structural variation and grave goods suggest that the evolution or transformation in the construction as well as in the placement and nature of grave goods. One could visualize different stages of development. The earliest burials are pit burials enclosed with stone circles, have devoid/meagre number of black-and-red ware pots but placed with red/red slipped ware pots, particularly globular pots. As far as, iron objects are concerned, they were restricted to iron swords and axes. The second level of pit burials met with black-and-red ware globular pots with graffiti marks, shallow bowls, bowls with conical base, iron knives and arrow heads were added in the ceramic assemblage in addition to swords and axes. The third level of graves are cist burials with U-shaped porthole observed on the top of the front orthostat initially facing west and later on facing east. Probably the round porthole on the east appeared after U-shaped porthole. Within the U-shaped porthole, the one facing west could be considered early. When compare with pit burial, the number grave goods increased. Interestingly, the ring stands first time appeared but in red ware. The later day ring stands were generally made out of black slipped ware. For instance all the chamber tombs of Early Historic period met with black slipped ware ring stands as one noticed at Kodumanal and Porunthal. The three-legged jar of red ware or red slipped ware started appearing in the last phase of this stage. All the iron objects were generally placed in the northern part of the chamber. All the graves are devoid of any skeletal remains. All the above said graves were exposed in the Locality-1 close to the habitation and rock shelter.

All the five graves encountered in Locality-2 were chamber tombs. All the graves are cist burials entombed with a heavy capstone and few covered with cairn packing. All these cist burials had round porthole on its eastern orthostat. When compare with pit burials and chamber tombs of Locality-1, the number of grave goods placed inside the cist is considerably higher. Three-legged jars, black-and-red ware pots, iron objects such as spears, swords and arrow heads dominate. Graffiti marks engraved on the shoulder portions of the pot. The skeletal remains restricted to one or two bones placed inside the chamber. This could be considered as the fourth level of erection of sepulchral monuments. In the final fifth level, the placement of sarcophagus was introduced along with skull, mandible and skeletal remains were placed inside the sarcophagus.

Thus, the pit burial without black-and-red ware, pit burial with black-red-ware, cist with U-shaped porthole facing west, cist with U-shaped porthole facing east and cist with round port hole facing east could be considered as the transformation or evolution of the ritual practices noticed in the sepulchral monuments. In case of grave goods, the non-appearance of black-and-red ware, appearance of black-and-red ware, the introduction of three-legged jar and sarcophagus could be considered as a kind of ritual transformation synchronizing with structural evolution as stated above. Unlike other graves opened in the places such as Sivagalai, Adichchanallur, Kontagai, Thandikudi, Porunthal, Kodumanal and many other places, the grave goods collected from Mayiladumparai are rudimentary in nature and one hardly get any elite or luxuries material. Therefore, Mayiladumparai graves belong to the late phase of the Neolithic period and early phase of the Iron Age.

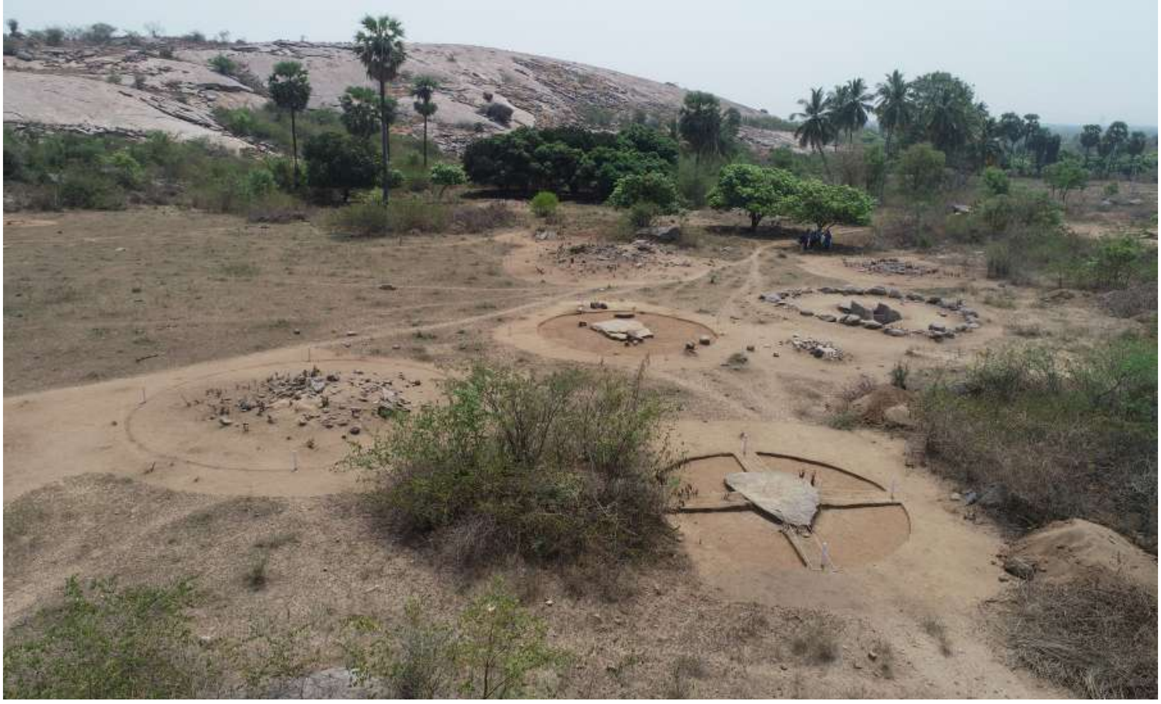


Fig. 4.27.4 General view of the graves

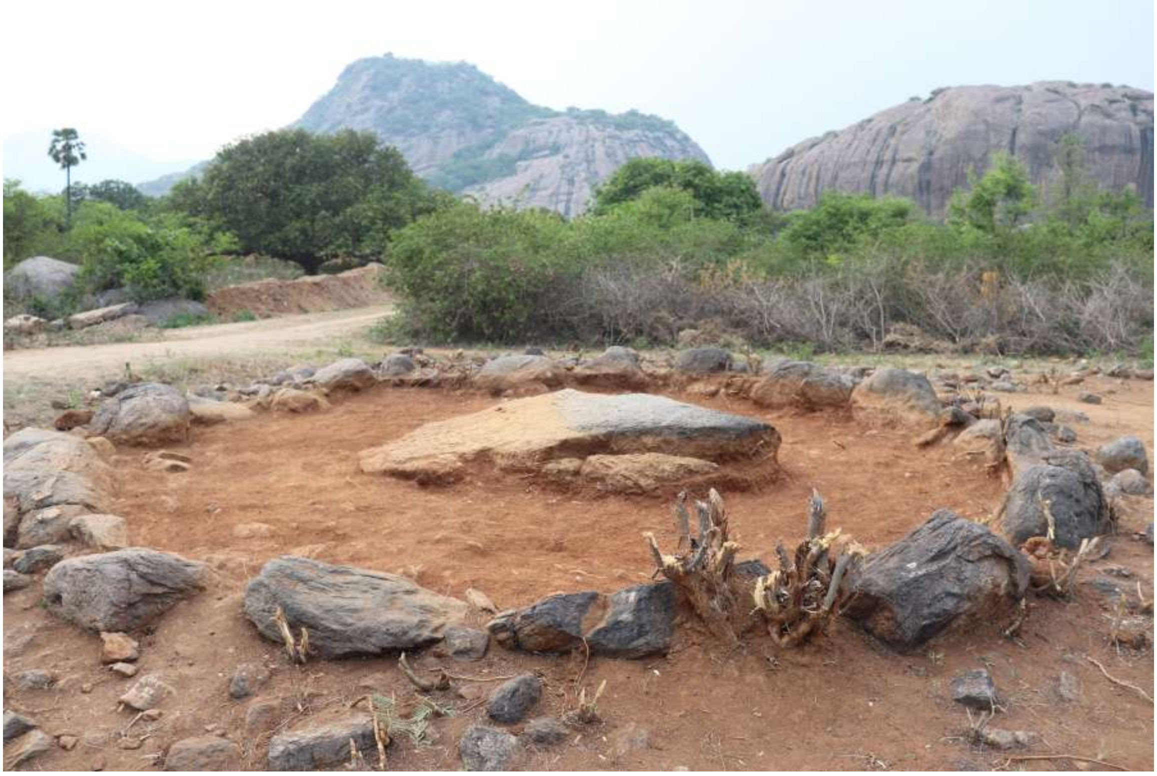


Fig. 4.27.5 *Circle with exposed capstone*

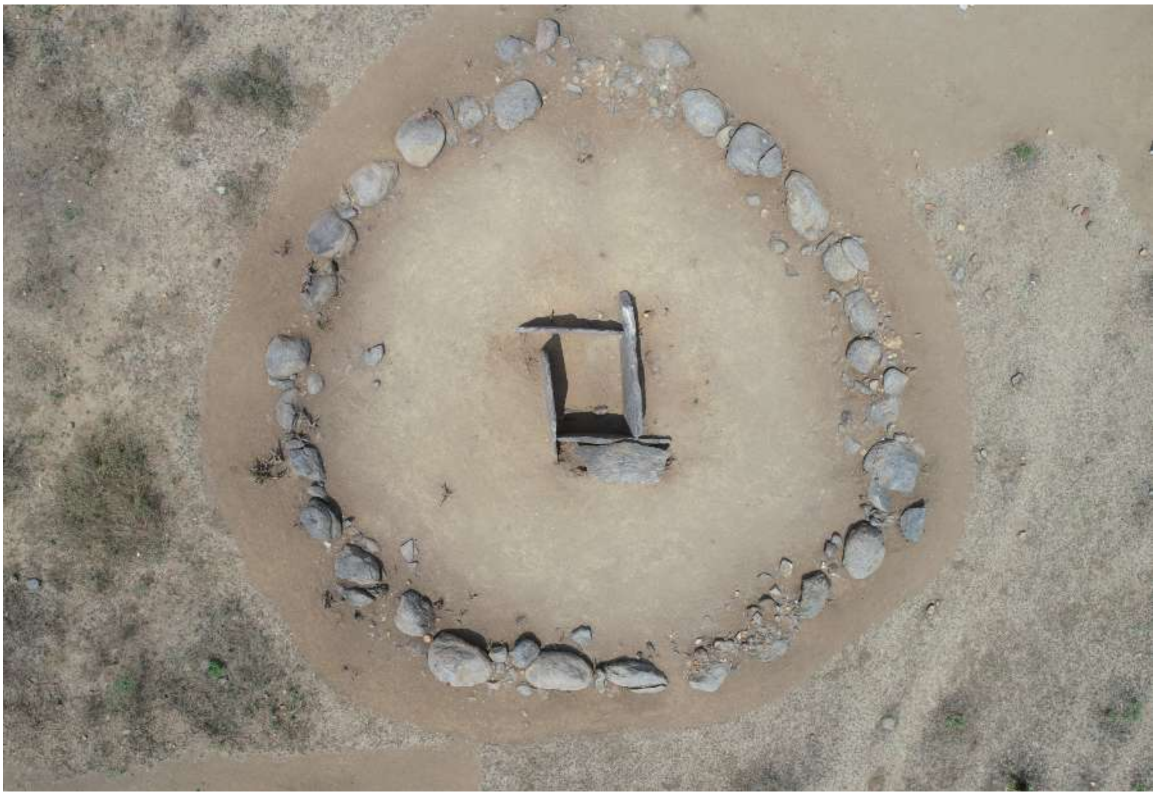


Fig. 4.27.6 *Circle with a cist*

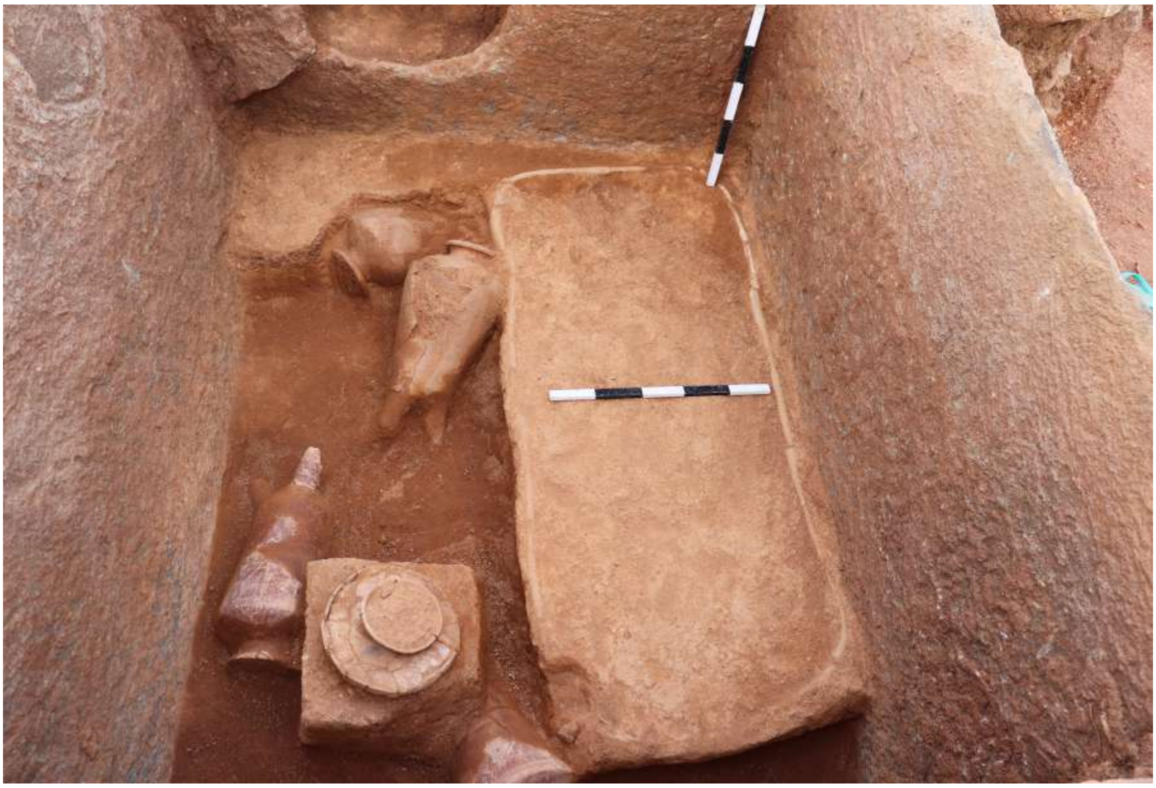


Fig. 4.27.7 Cist burial with sarcophagus

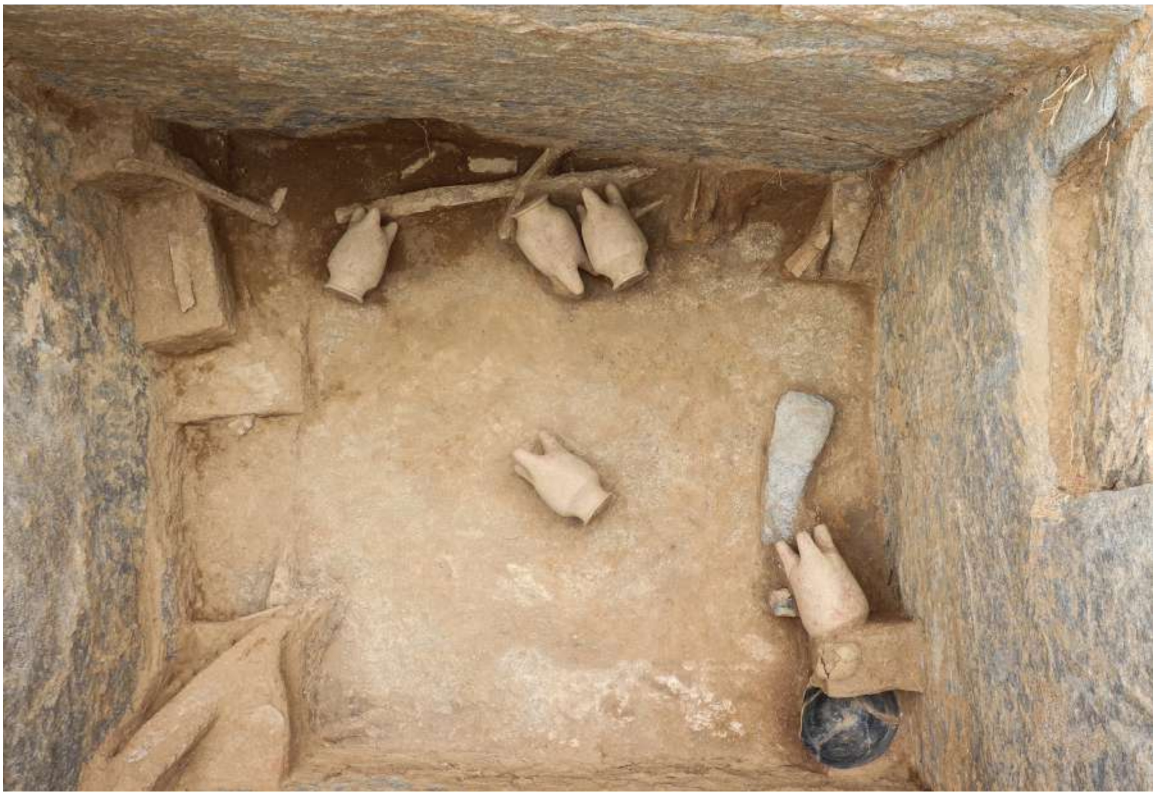


Fig. 4.27.8 Cist burial with three-legged jars

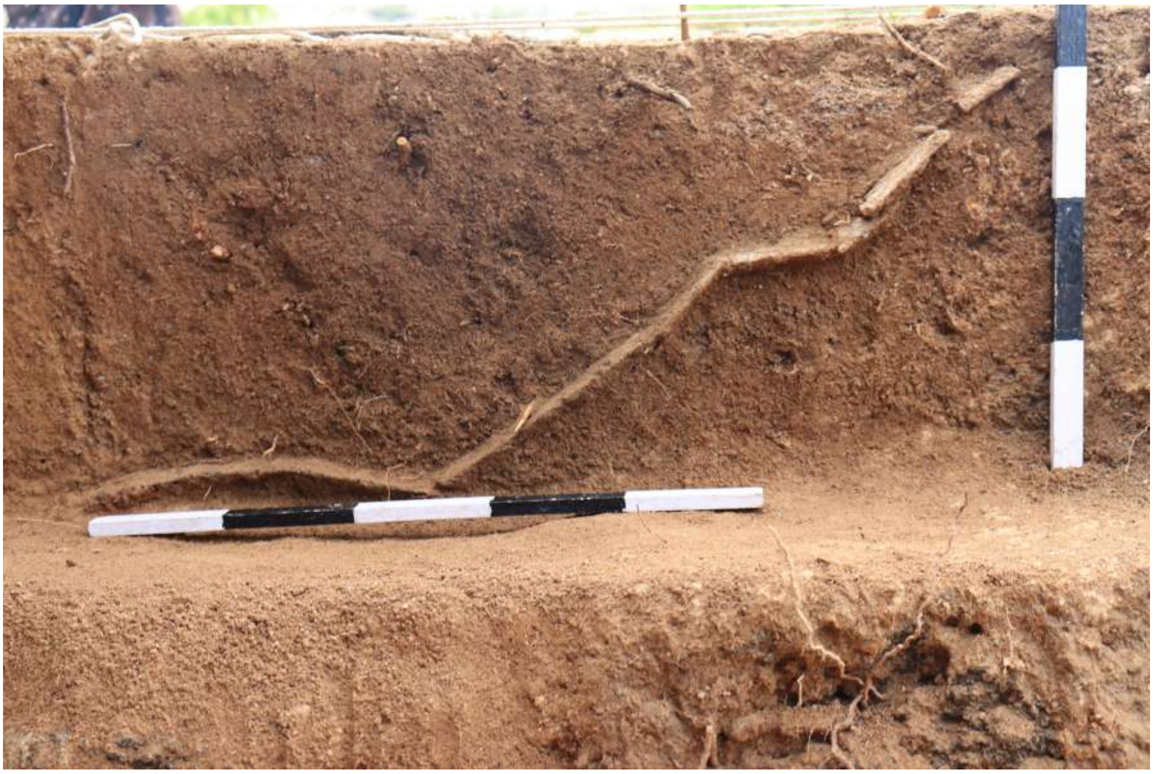


Fig. 4.27.9 An iron sword

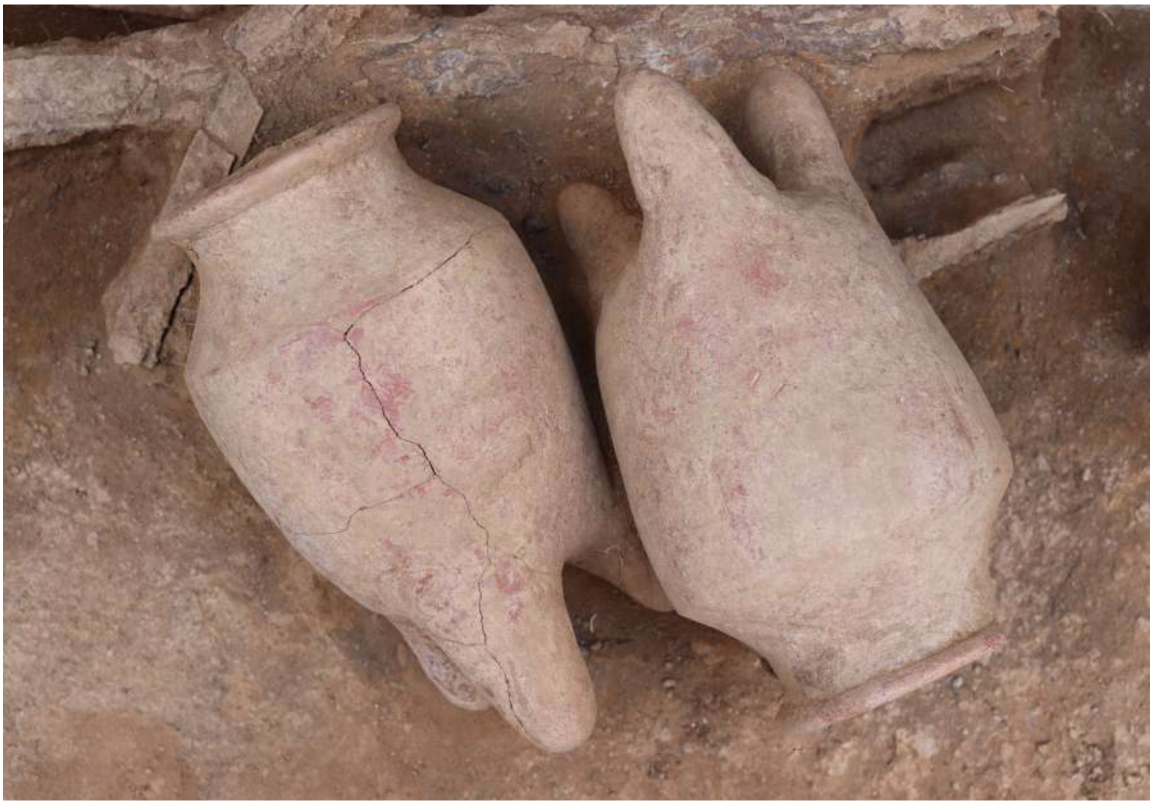


Fig. 4.27.10 Cist burial with three-legged jars

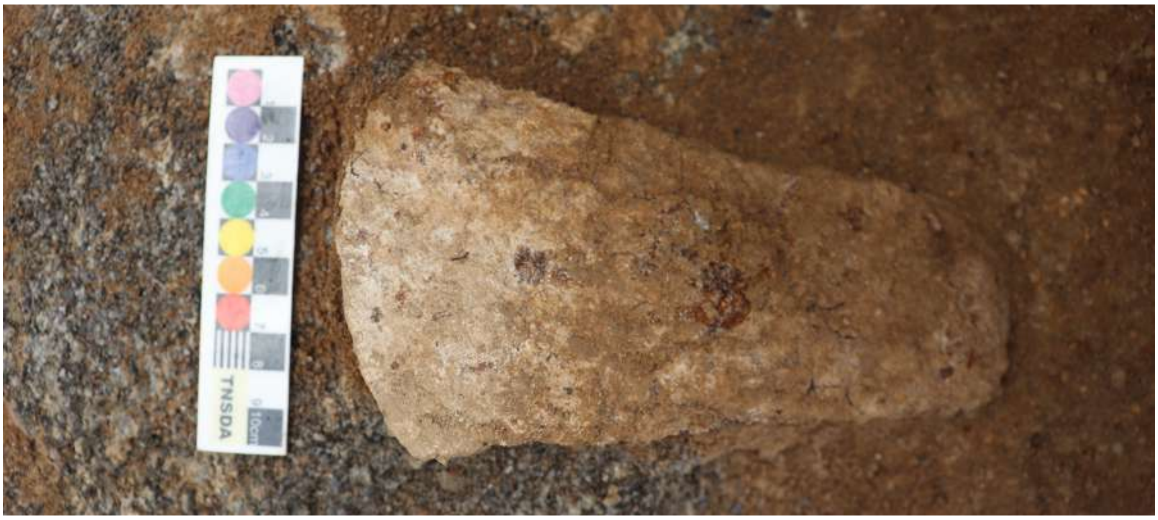


Fig. 4.27.11 Iron chisel placed on the floor slab of the cist

AMS dates of Mayiladumparai

The trenches laid in the Locality-4 in the present excavation yielded two important AMS dates. The two dates were obtained at the depth of 104 cm and 130 cm which yielded the date of the uncalibrated conventional AMS date of 1360 BCE and 1810 BCE. The mid-range calibrated dates for the said two dates are 1615 BCE and 2172 BCE respectively.

Rock paintings

There are eight rock shelters depicting rock paintings located in the hills in and around Mayiladumapari and I.Kundam. All of them fall within radius of 2-3 kilometers (Figs. 4.27.12-4.27.19).

S.No	Shelter No.	Shelter Name	Latitude	Longitude
1	I	Nekul-junai	12° 26’ 43” N	78° 19’ 54” E
2	II	Nettikutty-parai	12° 26’ 33” N	78° 19’ 54” E
3	III	Puttalappan-kottai	12° 44’ 22” N	78° 32’ 27” E
4	IV	Katlappan-junai	12° 26’ 52” N	78° 19’ 27” E
5	V	Muniyappan-thotti	12° 27’ 03” N	78° 19’ 03” E
6	VI	Allasami-junai	12° 26’ 33” N	78° 18’ 58” E
7	VII	Behind the Allasami-junai	12° 26’ 33” N	78° 18’ 58” E
8	VIII	Bajari-kundu	12° 26’ 10” N	78° 19’ 18” E

Nekul Junai

The first rock shelter called Nekul junai (a corrupt form of *nilal-sunai*) is located near the habitation mound at Karuvottupallam. It has preserved rock paintings in red and white colours. The red colour is superimposed by white pigment thereby indicating an earlier date for the red paintings (Figs. 4.27.20-4.27.21). The non-occurrence of any habitation material in the rock shelter suggests that these were executed on some special occasions. Fighting scenes, tilling a land, dancing in a row, riding a horse (?), men with cattle, etc., are some of the scenes portrayed here. In a few cases, the bow and arrow were raised above the head of the man in a position of charging an arrow pointing upward. Otherwise, men are shown in a fighting posture, holding the bow and arrow against each other. This recalls the sculptural panel of the later-day memorial stones found in the area.

Putlappan kottai

A natural cave called Putlappan kottai is located on the north-west side of the Kaurethi hill. This cave faces south and is oriented east-west (Fig. 4.27.15) Also, there are two sets of paintings on the ceiling of this cave. Both are painted in white. The first set contains two human figures and the second a swastika symbol. These two sets of paintings are in white; they can date to the late Iron Age or early historical period. Excavation was carried out 50 m to the south of this cave in the year 2022. This trench yielded black and red pottery, red slipped pottery and russet coated painted pottery. Apart from these, Hopscotch's, iron objects like arrow heads, nails, etc., shell bangles, and semi-precious stone beads were found in the excavated trenches, which can be confirmed as belonging to an early historical period.

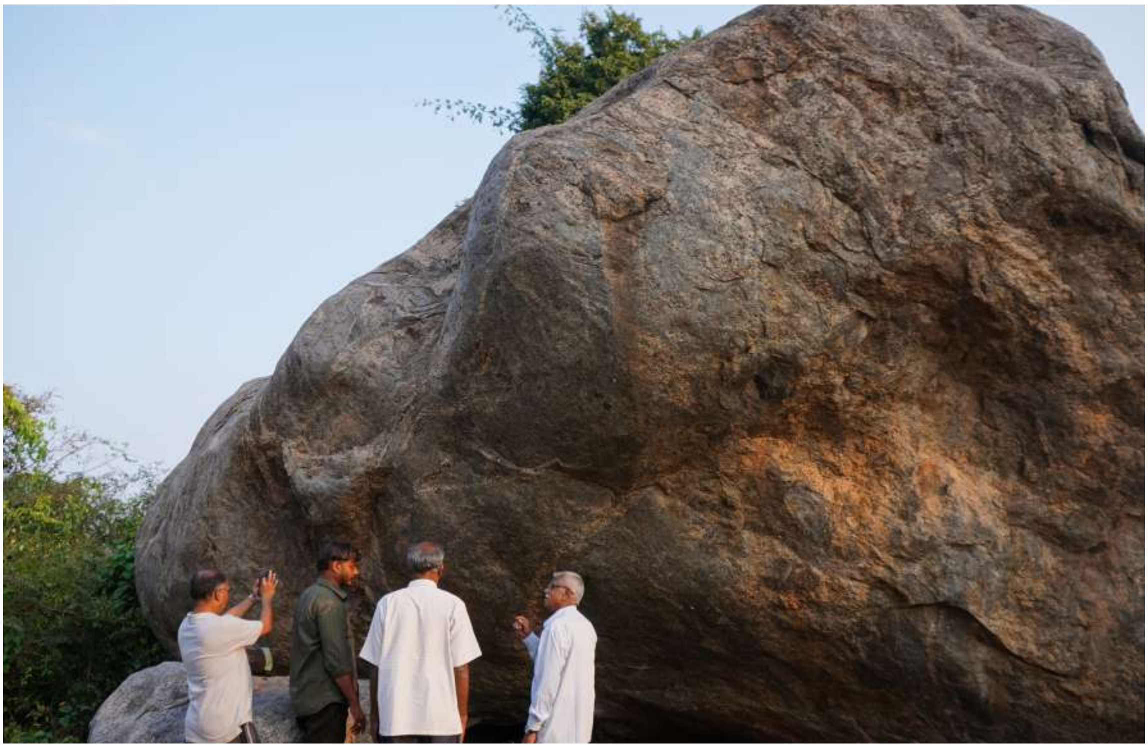


Fig. 4.27.12 General view of the rock shelter Nekul Junai

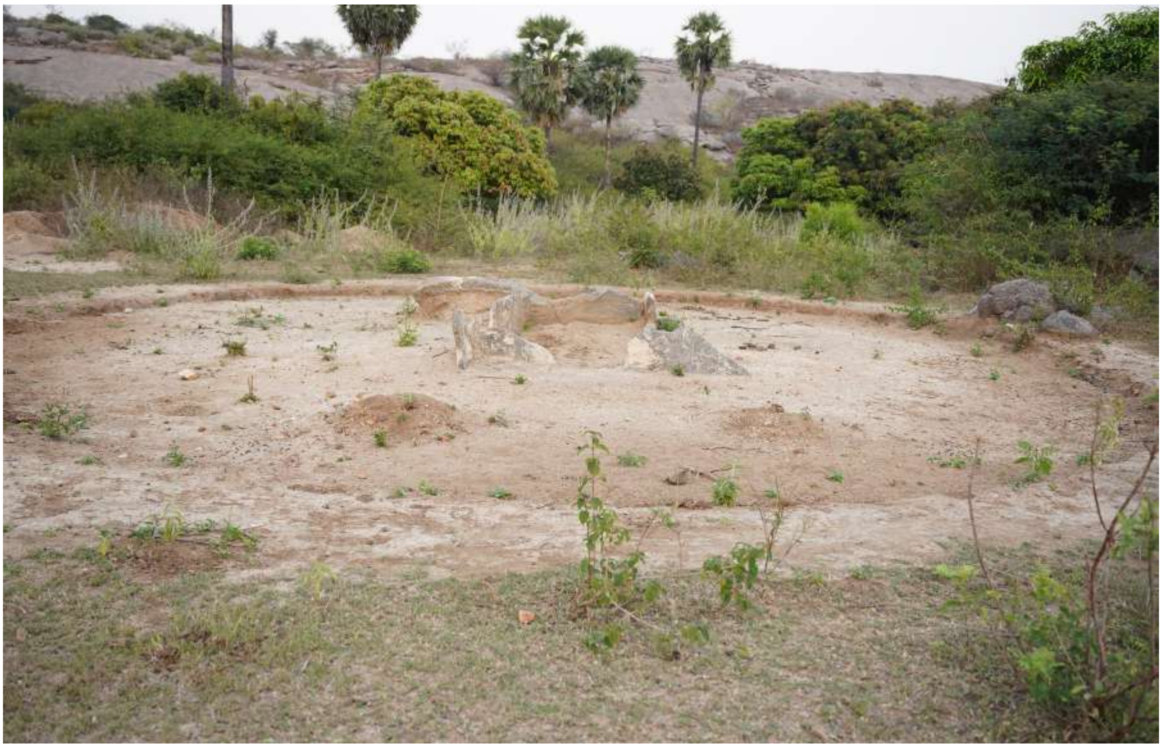


Fig. 4.27.12 General view of the rock shelter Nekul Junai

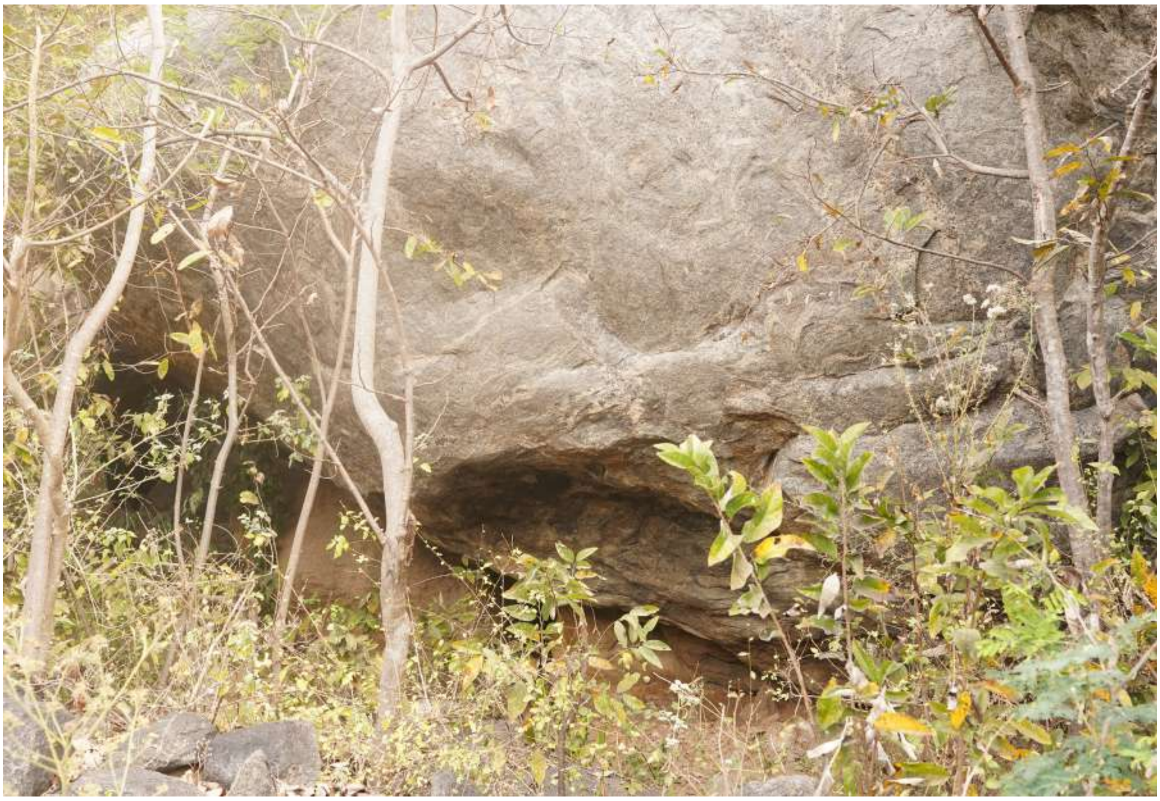


Fig. 4.27.14 General view of the rock shelter Puttalappan-kottai

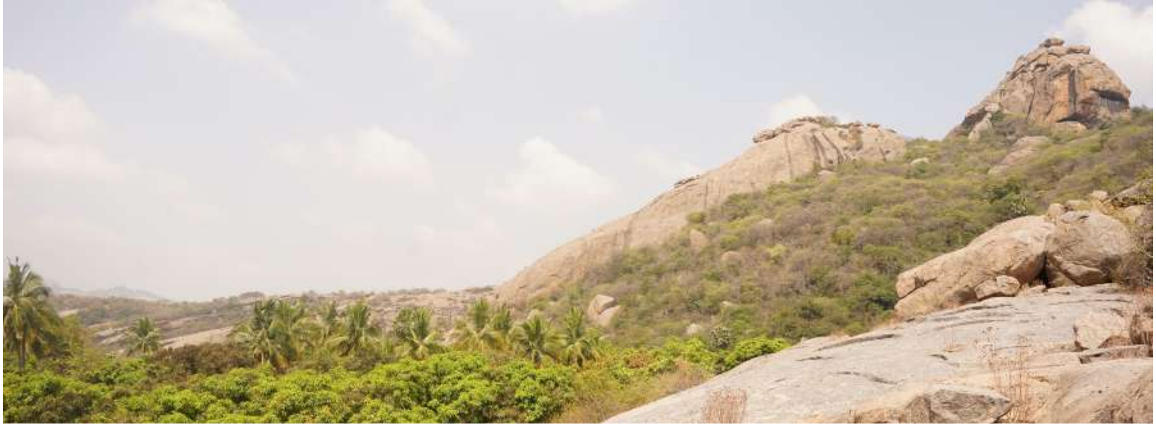


Fig. 4.27.15 General view of the rock shelter Katalappan-junai

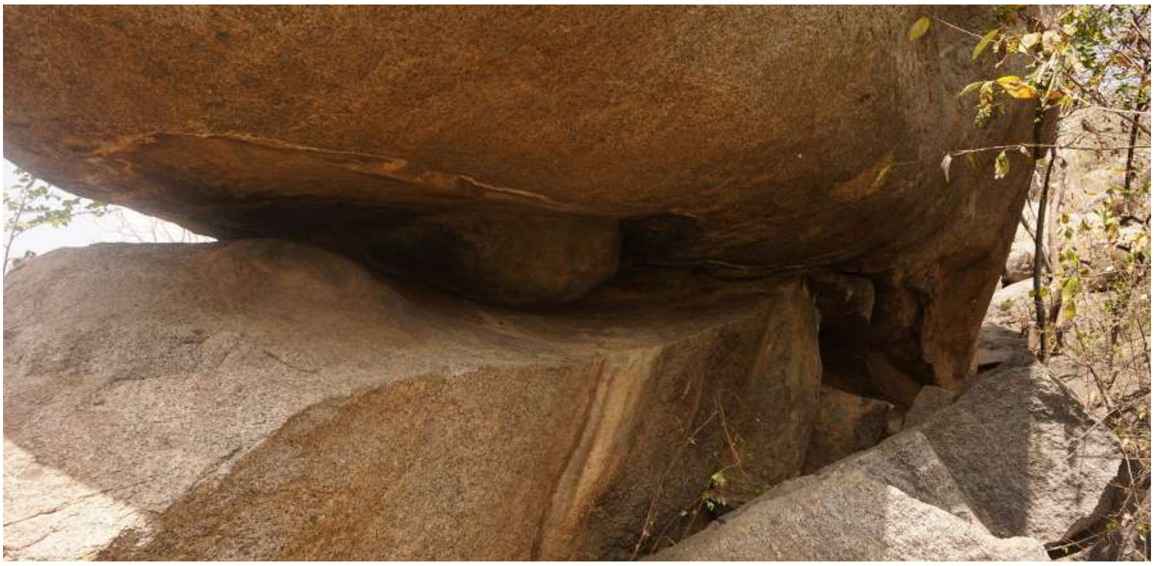


Fig. 4.27.16 General view of the rock shelter Muniappan-thotti

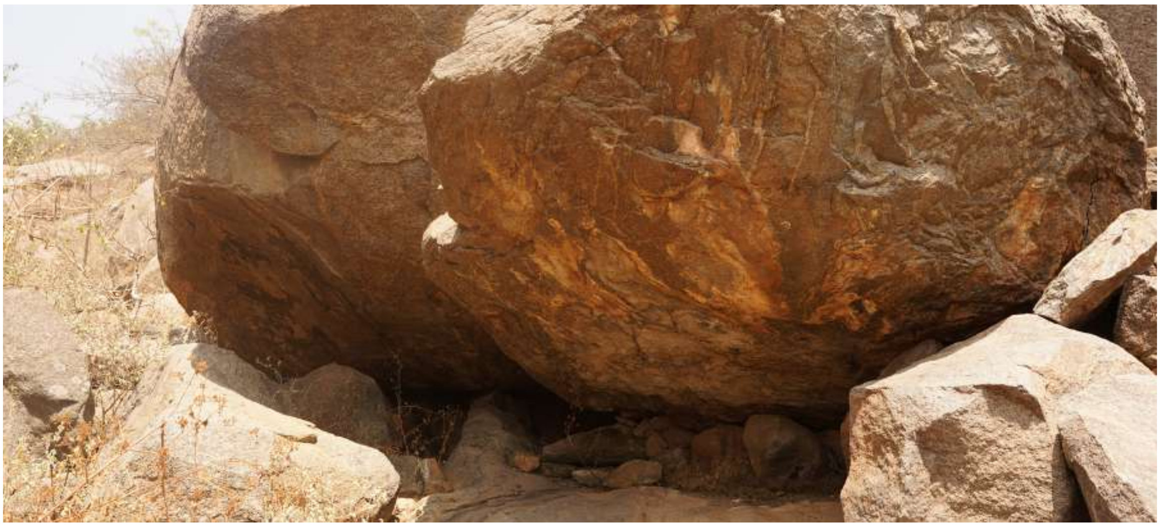


Fig. 4.27.17 General view of the rock shelter Allasami-junai

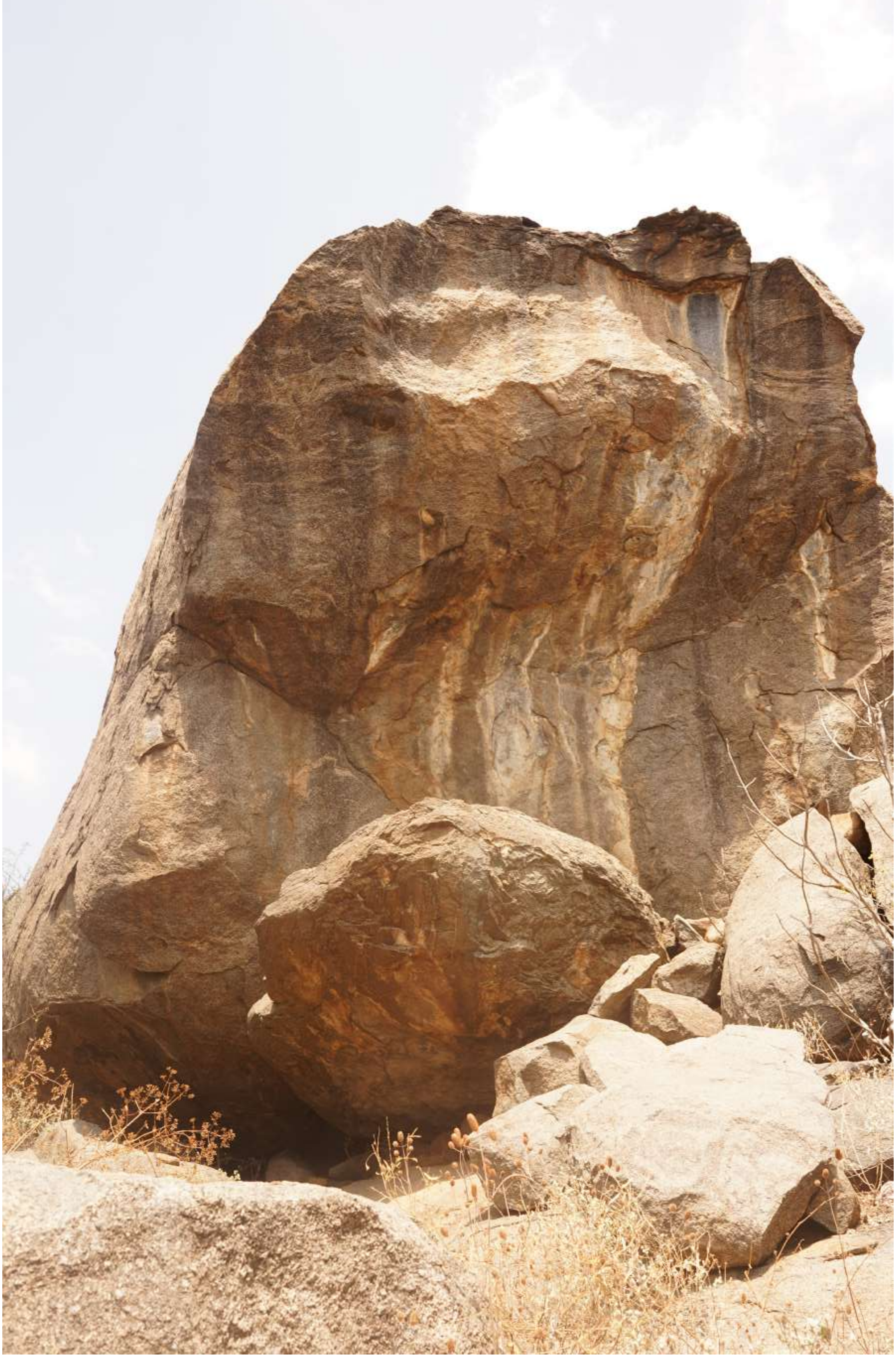


Fig. 4.27.18 *General view of the rock shelter behind Allasami-junai*

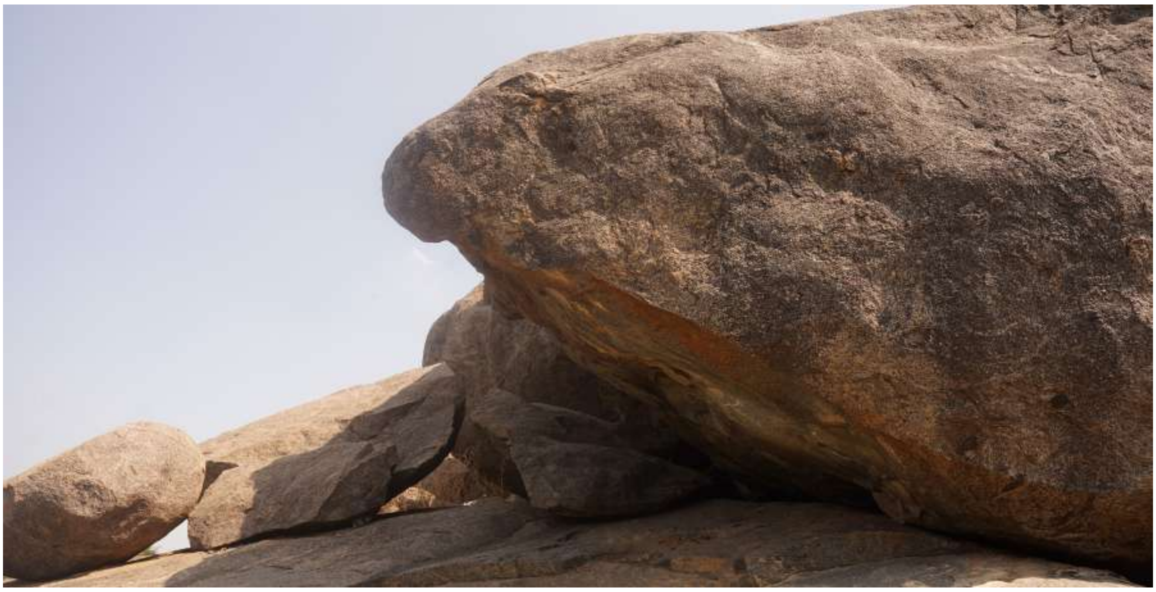


Fig. 4.27.19 General view of the rock shelter Bajari-kundu

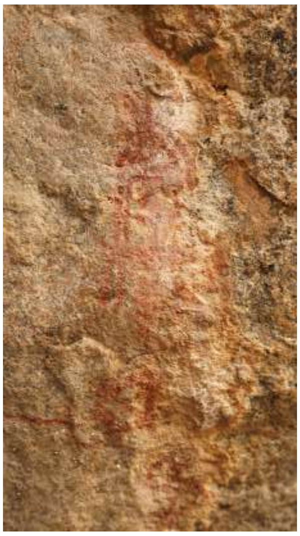


Fig. 4.27.20 Nekul Junai paintings

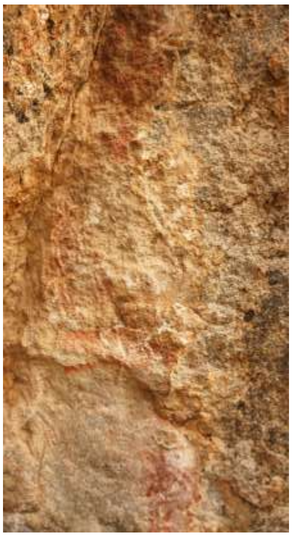


Fig. 4.27.21 Nekul Junai paintings

Muniappan thotti

Muniappan thotti is a cave located about 500 m to the west of Kaurethi Hill. This cave faces east aligned in north-south orientation. Water stagnates in this cave due to the streams that flow during the monsoon seasons. The paintings are in white, found on the ceiling of the shelter. There are several human figures, of which some human figures are mounted on animals. Apart from these, a painting can be assumed as a divinity or a leader due to the presence of a crown-like head with four arms. These paintings can be assigned to the early historical period.

Description

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of animals, human, geometric signs, hunting scene, sun symbol, erotic scene, trident like sign, X-ray form of unidentified scene, human fighting, animal in locomotion, fish like sign, goat and caret like sign, swastika, "X" like signs, adult and children, bow and arrow etc.

Panel Description

The first group of paintings are executed with red colour depicting a man seated or standing on an animal and he was covered by a house like structure. Besides this, human figures holding weapons like swords and dagger were shown. In the third one, six pairs of men are shown in a fighting mode. One man is killing an animal with a long lance. In the fourth one, two men are shown holding a bow or shield and standing against each other. One man is killing a wild pig. Another man is riding an animal. In the last one, two human figures are shown in an amorous posture.

The figure shows an animal hunting scene. An animal is surrounded by three hunters. The animal looks like a huge lizard. In that scene, two of them are raising their right and left arm for preventing damage from the attacking animal. The geometric box having the diamond shape could be a trap cage. It is possible that, the scene would be a hunting scene, due to the action of the hunters against the animal. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.22a-4.27.22b).

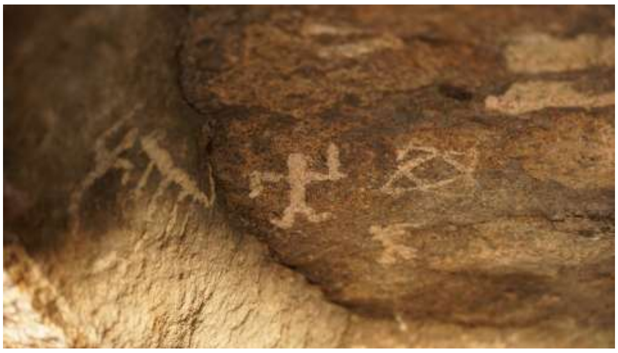


Fig. 4.27.22a Animal hunting, humans and geometrical sign

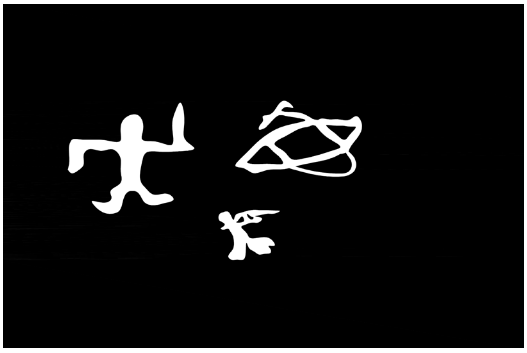


Fig. 4.27.22b Animal hunting, humans and geometrical sign

The figure depicts an animal hunting scene. Six hunters are attacking three animals. A dog-like animal is present at the top left, where a hunter is throwing a stick-like object. Two hunters are raising their right hands. At the bottom, where three hunters are waiting to trap the animal. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.23a-4.27.23b).

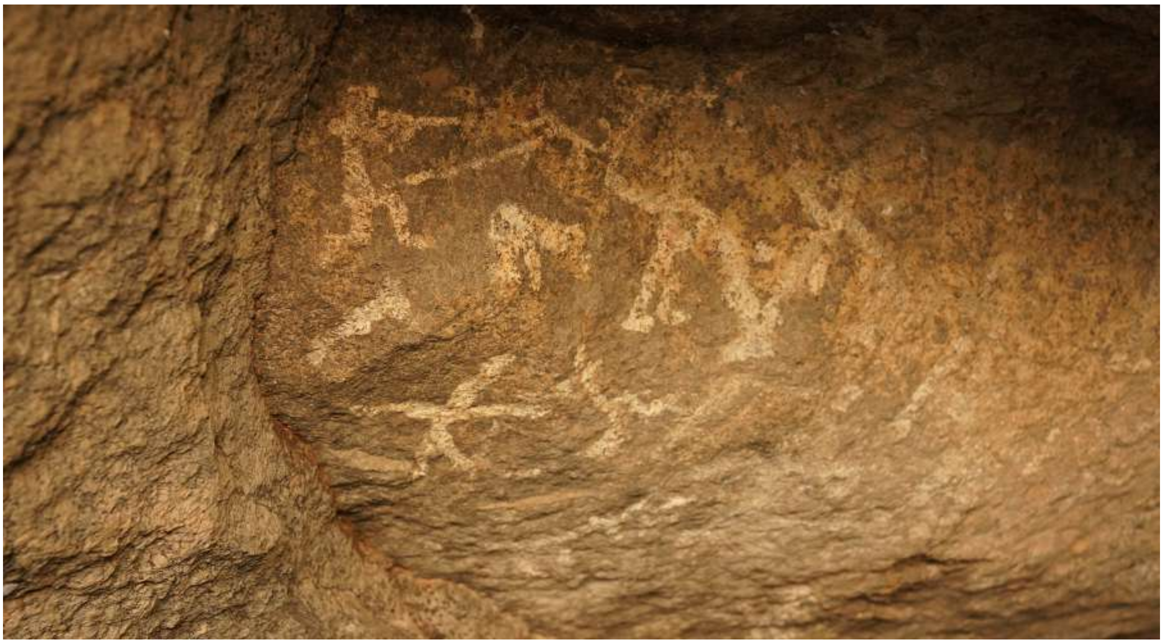


Fig. 4.27.23a Hunting scene

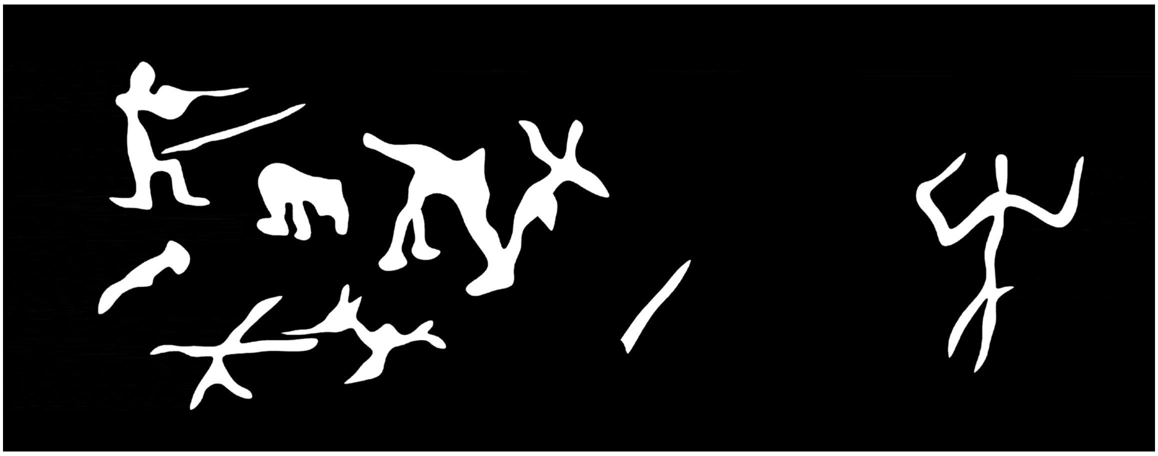


Fig. 4.27.23b Hunting scene

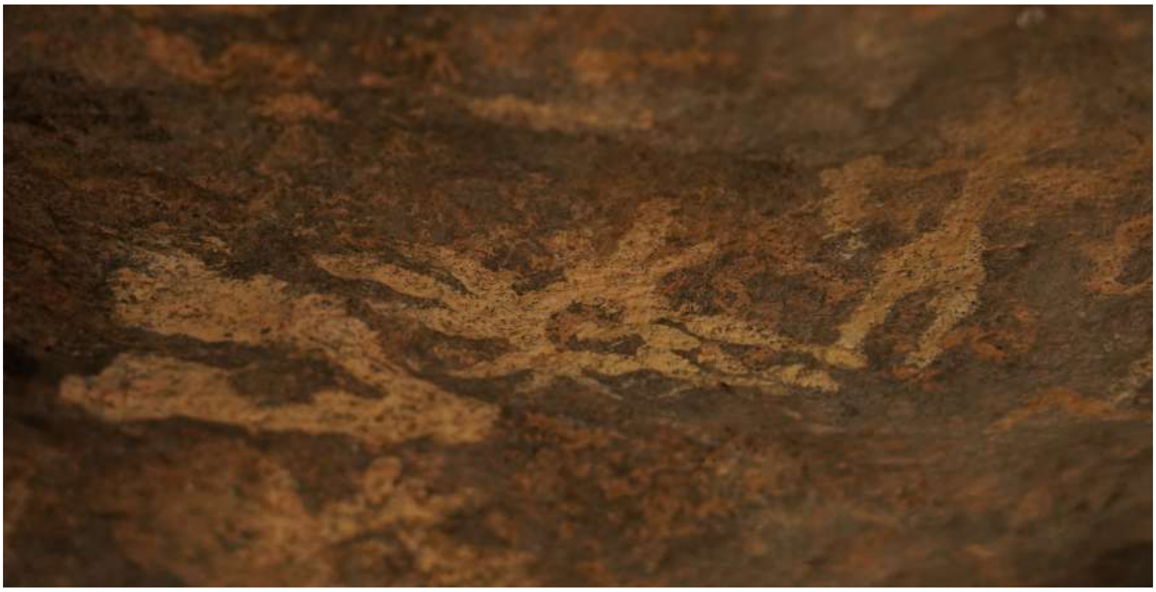


Fig. 4.27.24a Human and sun like sign

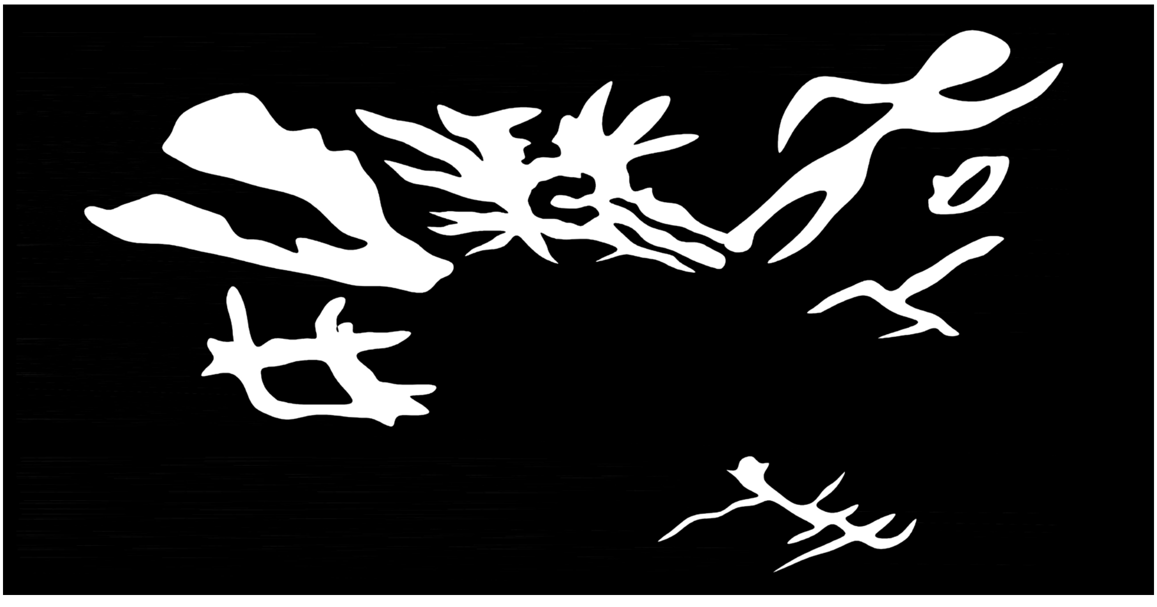


Fig. 4.27.24b Human and sun like sign

The painting shows a hunter and the sun symbol. A man standing with a sun-like sign and he is raising his left hand. A thick "V" like painting has drawn close to the sun-like sign. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.24a-4.27.24b).

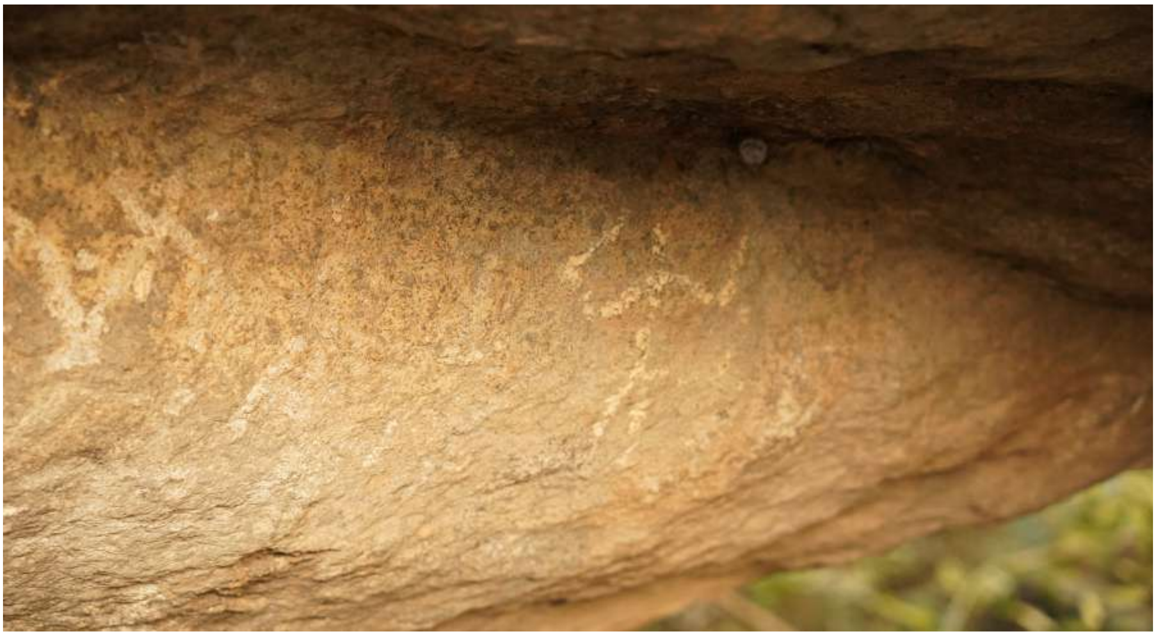


Fig. 4.27.25a Erotic scene

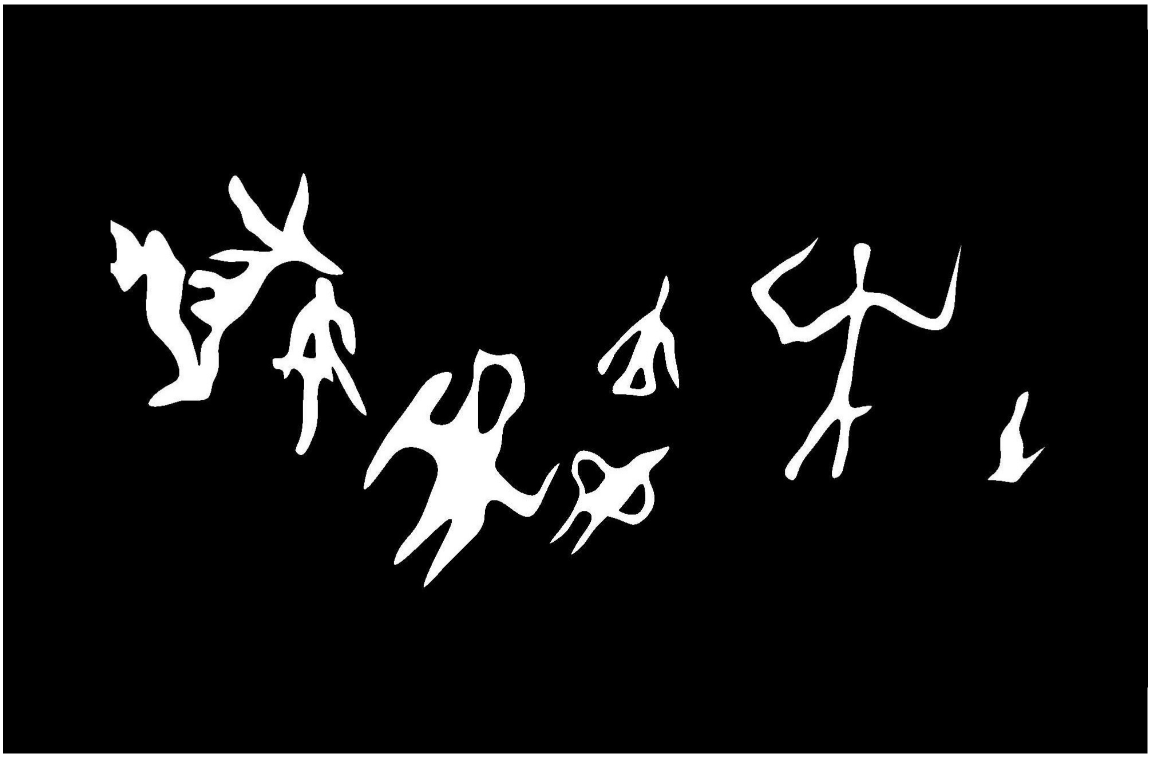


Fig. 4.27.25b Erotic scene

The painting depicts an erotic scene. A man is having a slender body. Other paintings are not visible to discern the narrative. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.25a-4.27.25b).

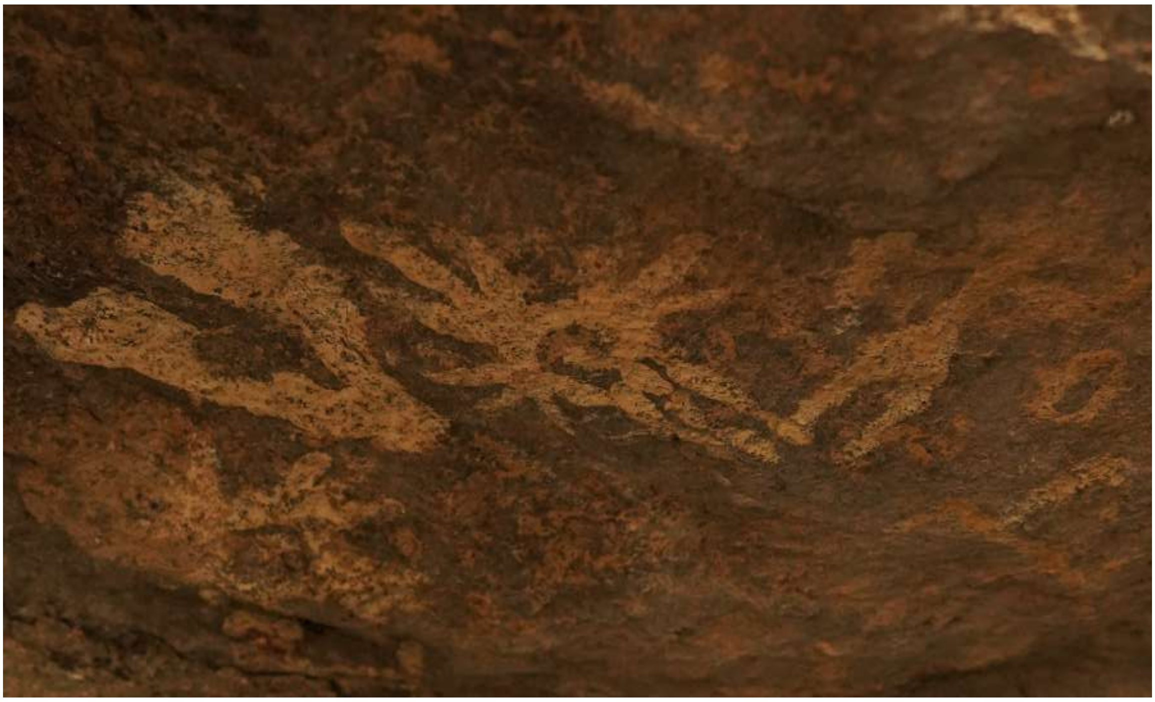


Fig. 4.27.26a *Animal hunting and humans*

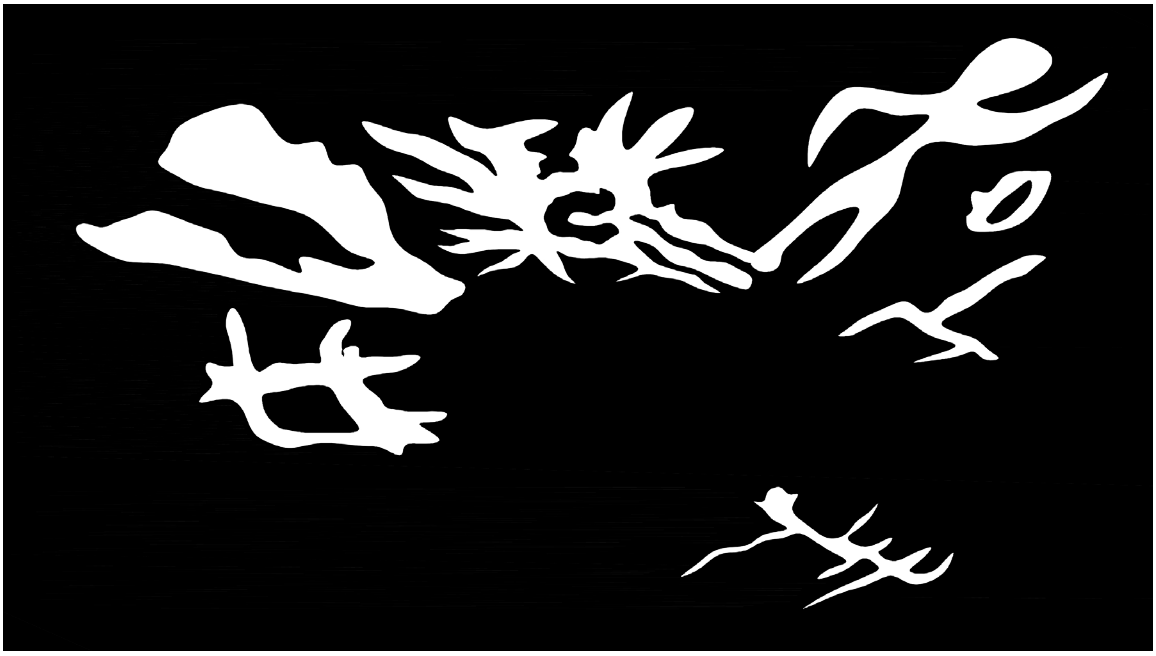


Fig. 4.27.26b *Animal hunting and humans*

The depiction is near the earlier discussed image (Fig. 4.27.24b). A boar-like animal is surrounded by hunters with weapons in their hands. A man who is standing alone at the bottom left is holding a sword-like weapon. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.26a-4.27.26b).

The figure is an animal hunting scene. A hunter is standing against the lizard-like animal. The hunter is having the weapon in his left hand, standing opposite to an animal with a open mouth. The animal is having a long tail. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.27a-4.27.27b).

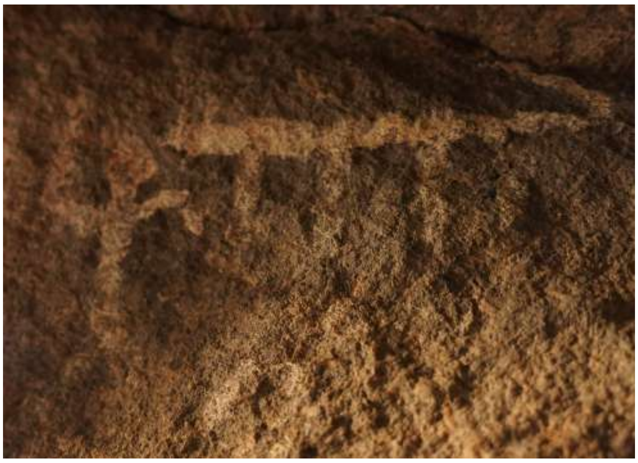


Fig. 4.27.27a Animal hunting

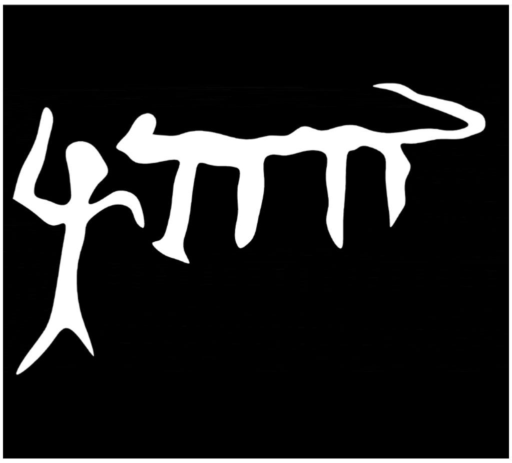


Fig. 4.27.27b Animal hunting

The depiction here is showing two hunters in front of a cage-like object or a geometric box. Both of them are raising their left arm. The man who is standing on the top left is shown raising his right arm. The geometrical box having a diamond shape could be a trap cage. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.28a-4.27.28b).

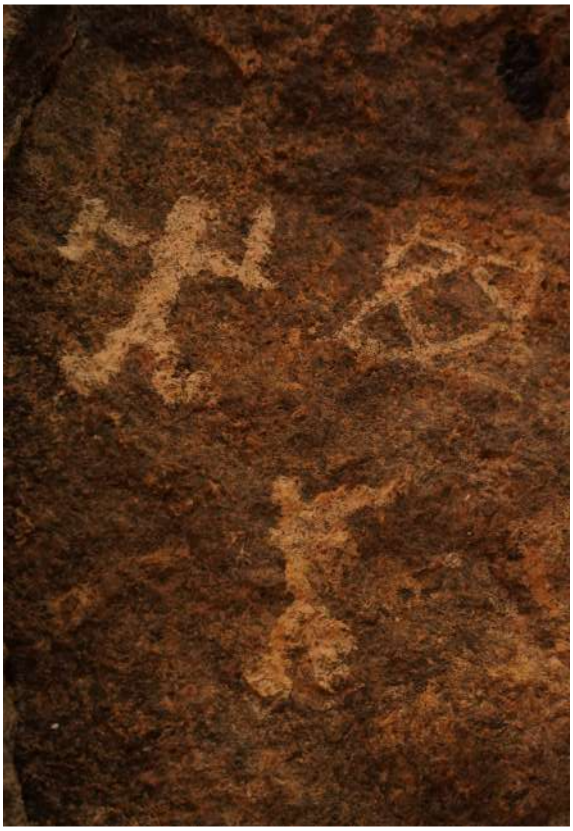


Fig. 4.27.28a Humans with weapons and geometrical sign

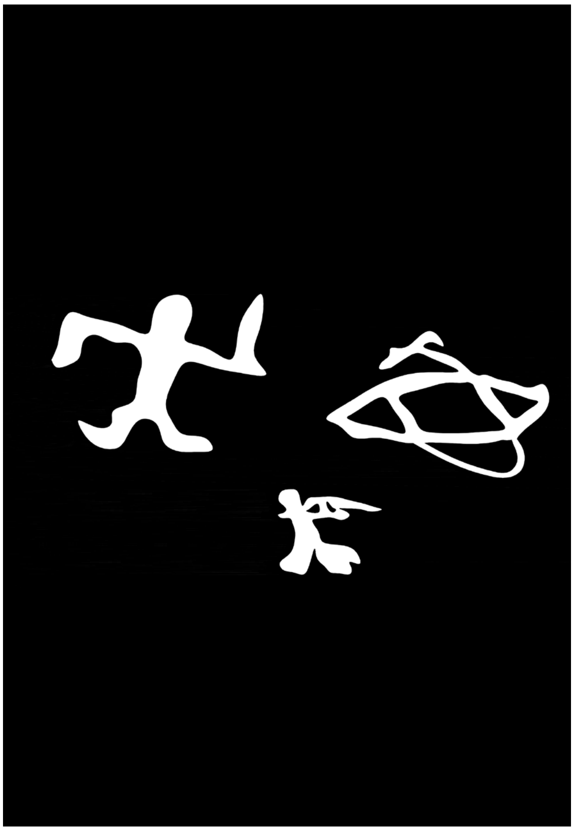


Fig. 4.27.28b Humans with weapons and geometrical sign

The figure is showing a trident? The colour of the paintings is red (Fig. 4.27.29a-4.27.29b).

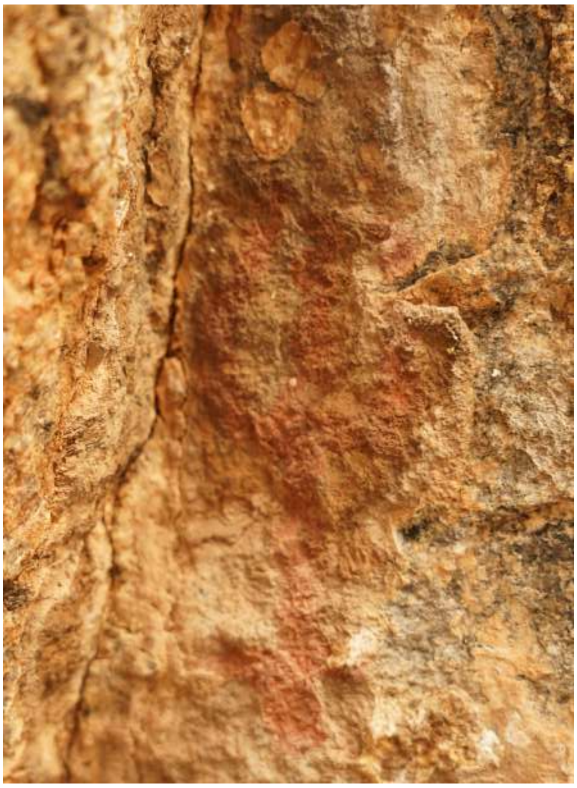


Fig. 4.27.29a Trident like sign

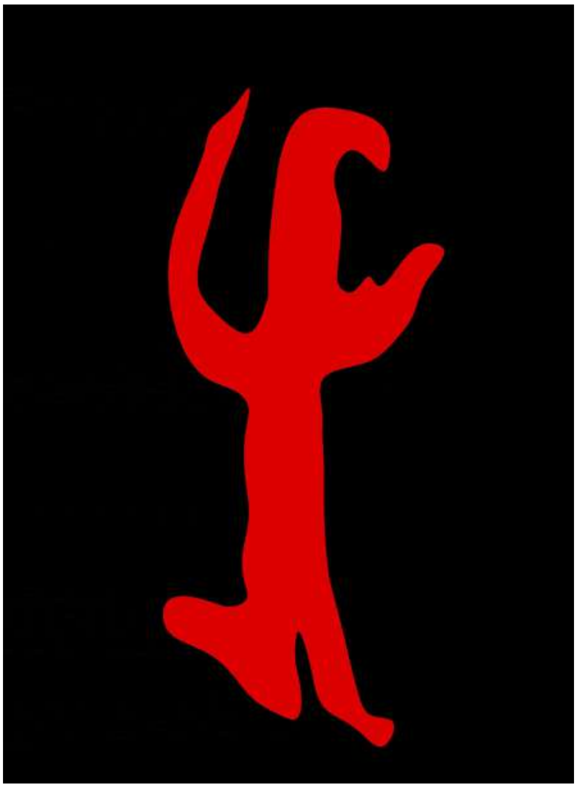


Fig. 4.27.29b Trident like sign

The figure is showing an unidentified animal in a geometric pattern. The bottom left is a cage-like box with having thick line. The colour of the paintings is red (Fig. 4.27.30a-4.27.30b).

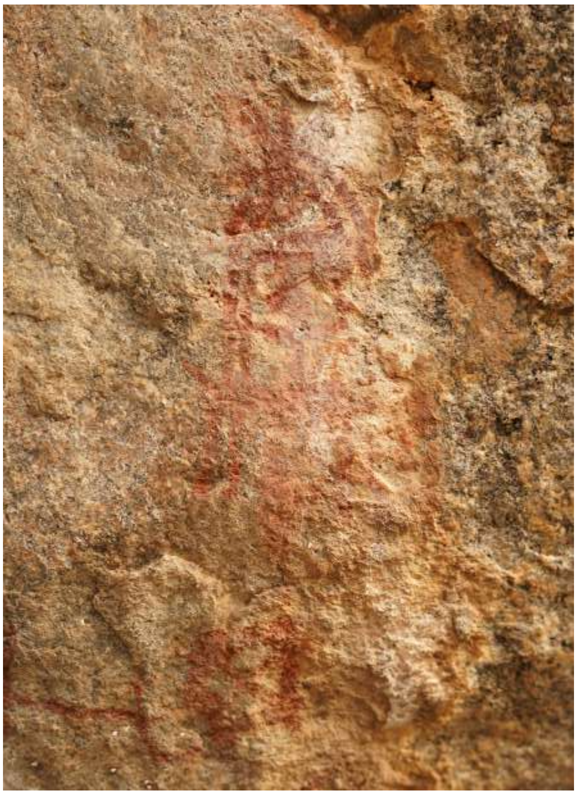


Fig. 4.27.30a X-ray form of unidentified scene

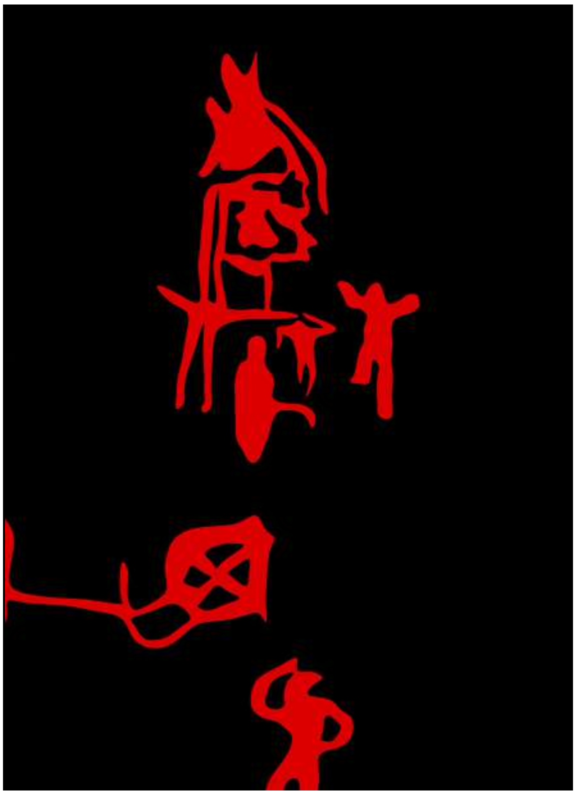


Fig. 4.27.30b X-ray form of unidentified scene

The figure is showing an animal standing under protection. It resembles the bonding of mother and child. The colour of the paintings is white (Fig. 4.27.31a-4.27.31b).

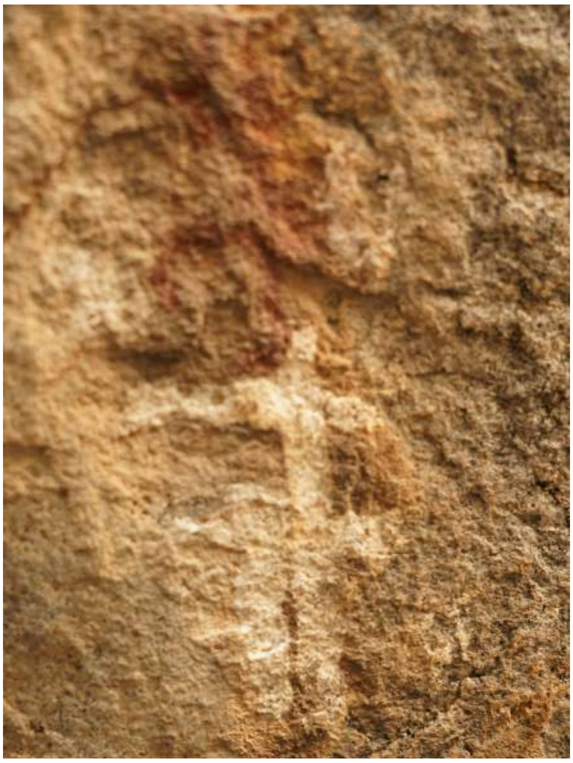


Fig. 4.27.31a Human with an animal

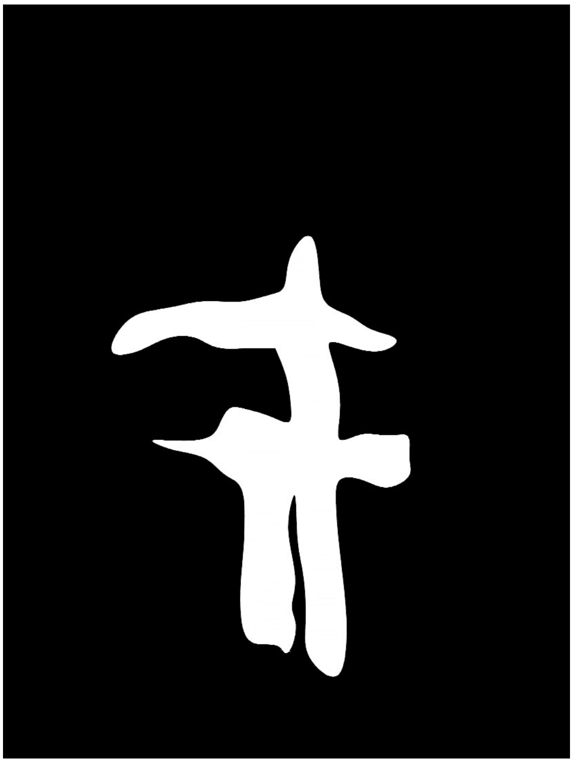


Fig. 4.27.31b Human with an animal

The depiction is showing an animal hunting scene. At the bottom right, a man is hunting an animal (boar) and he hits exactly the belly of the animal. The top right, a man is drawn sitting on the animal. In between the hunters, a sun-like sign is drawn which might indicate that daytime activity. Opposite to the hunting scene, two men are standing with slim bodies and both of them have raised their left hands. The colour of the paintings is white (Fig. 4.27.32a-4.27.32b).

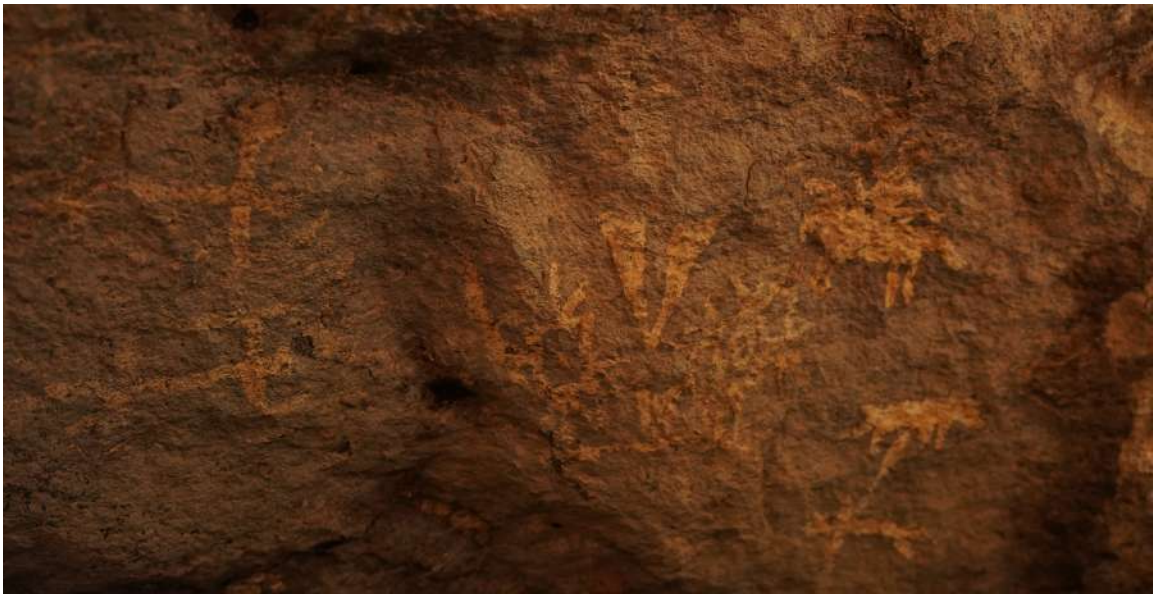


Fig. 4.27.32a Animal hunting, human fighting and animal raiding

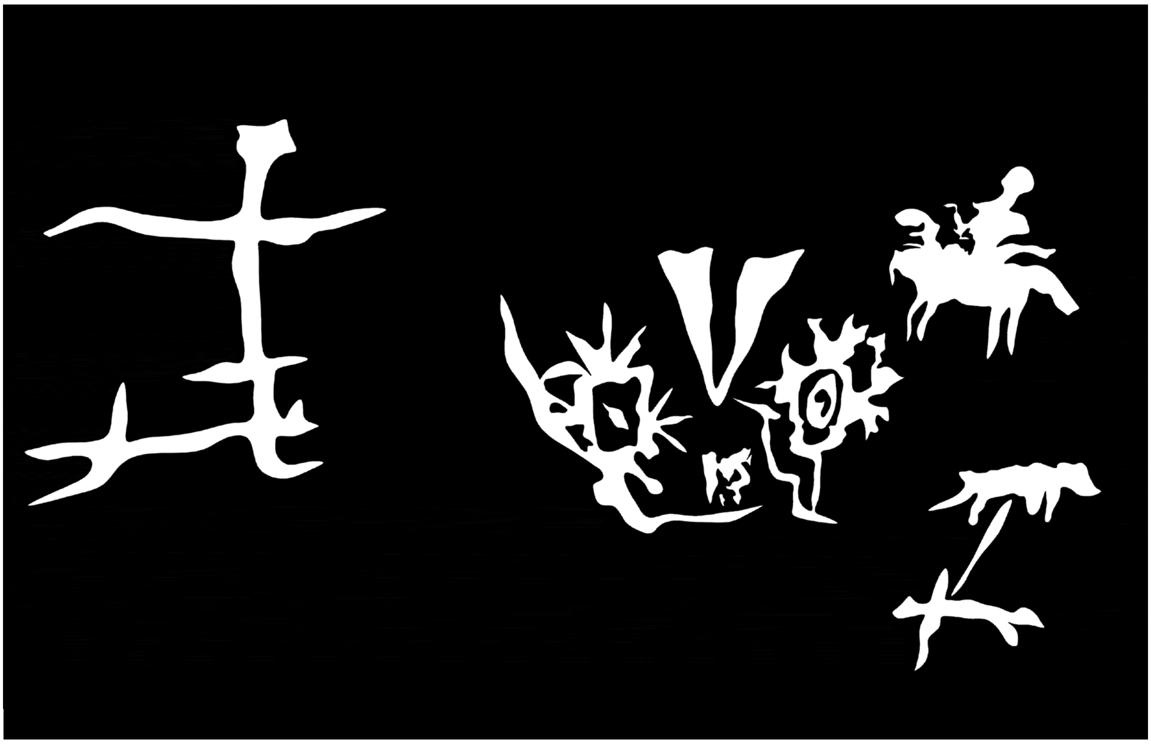


Fig. 4.27.32b Animal hunting, human fighting and animal raiding

This figure is showing a hunter in a sleeping pose. Other paintings are in faded. The red ochre paintings indicate caret-like sign. The colours of the paintings is red and white (Fig. 4.27.33a-4.27.33b).

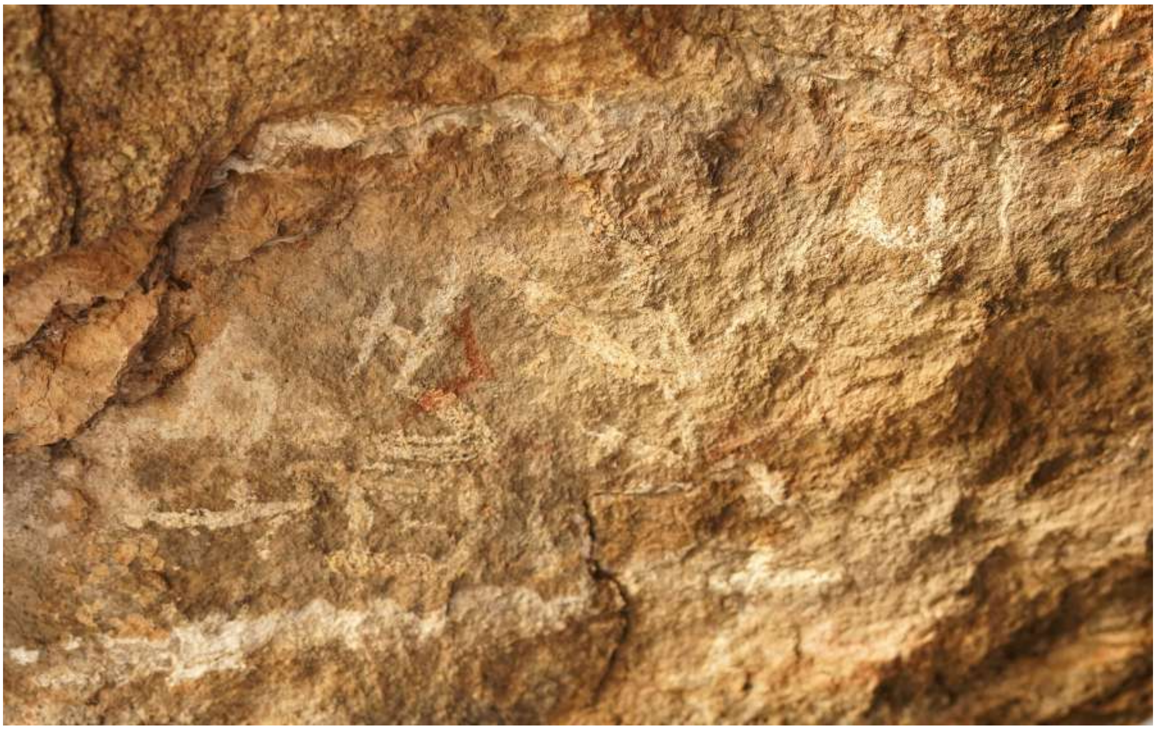


Fig. 4.27.33a Humans

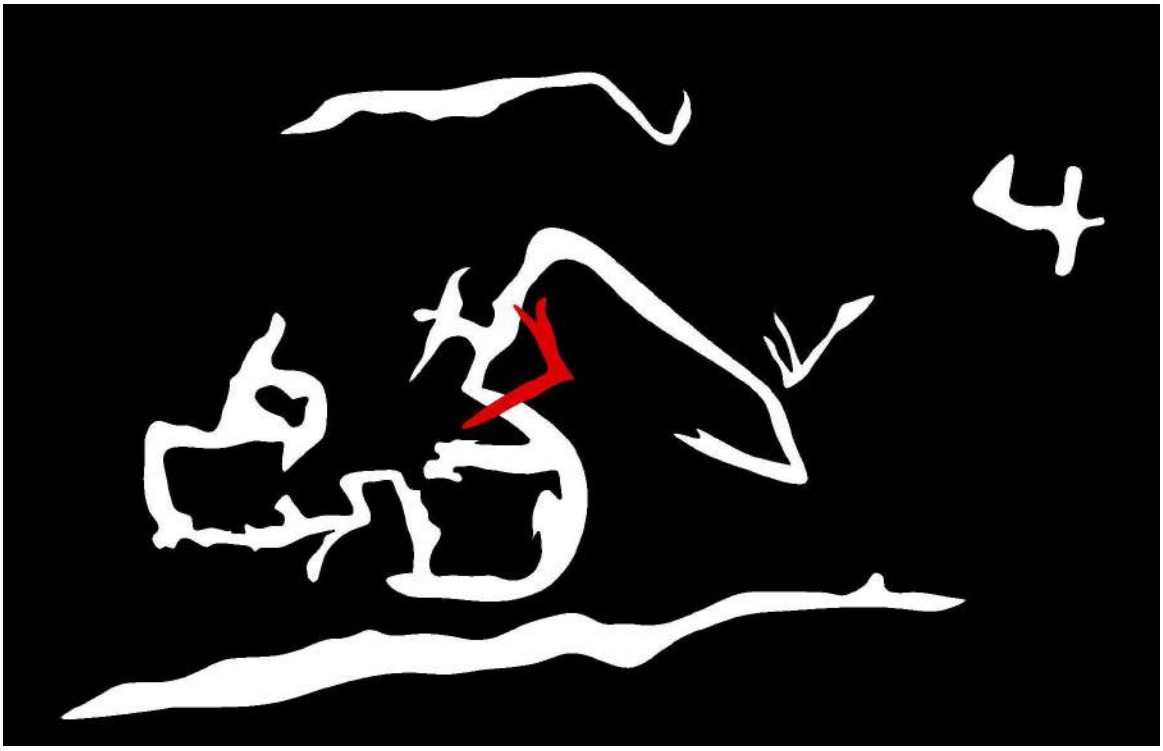


Fig. 4.27.33b Humans

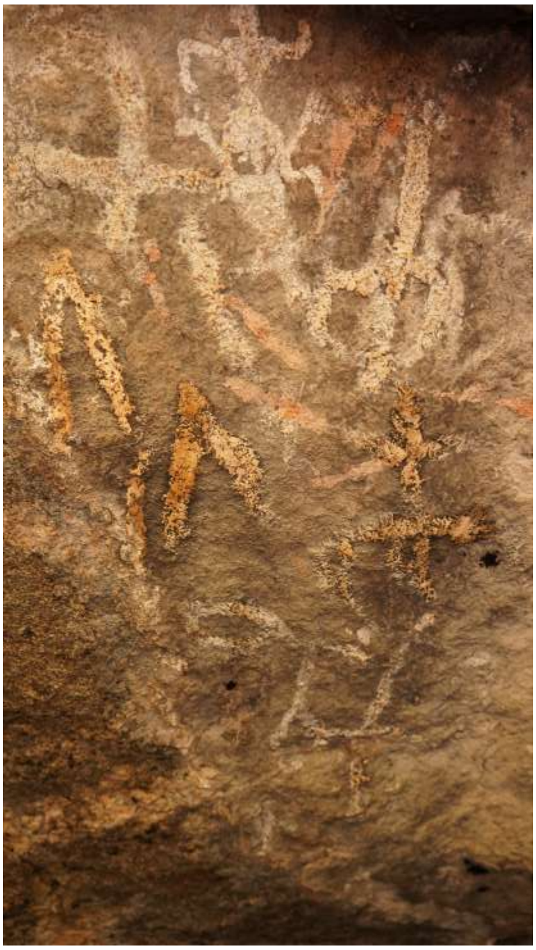


Fig. 4.27.34a Erotic scene

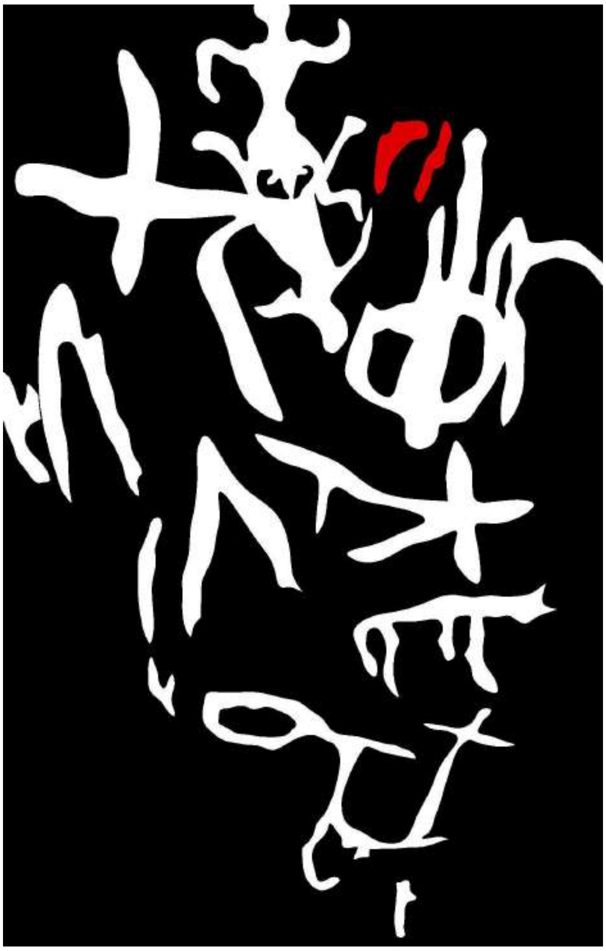


Fig. 4.27.34b Erotic scene

This depiction here is showing the erotic forms. On top of the panel, two people are involved in a sexual act. Two caret-like signs are painted on the left side of the panel. The bottom right has a painting of a hunter who is sitting on the animal. The colour of the paintings is white (Fig. 4.27.34a-4.27.34b).

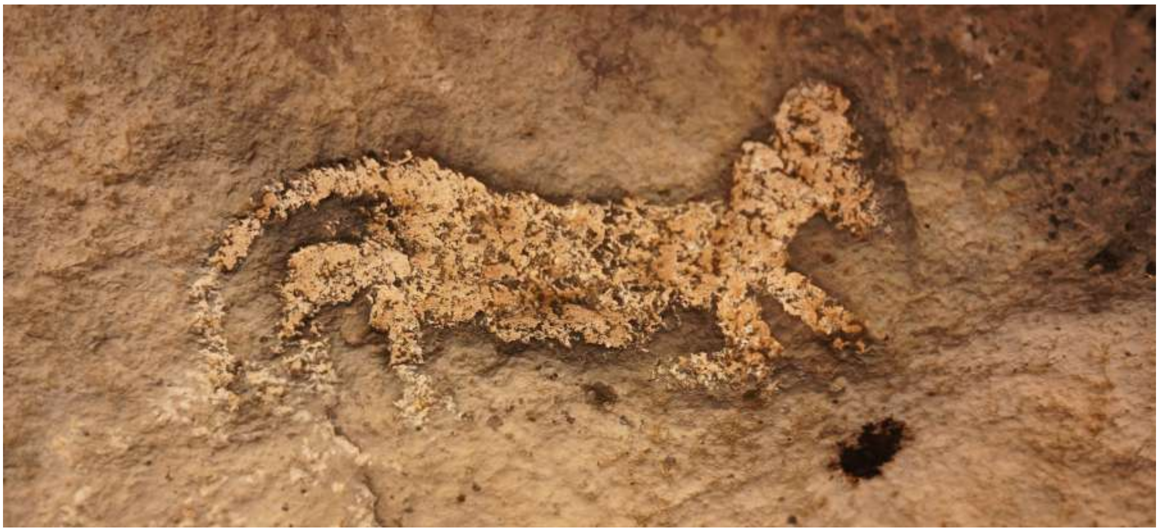


Fig. 4.27.35a Animal locomotion

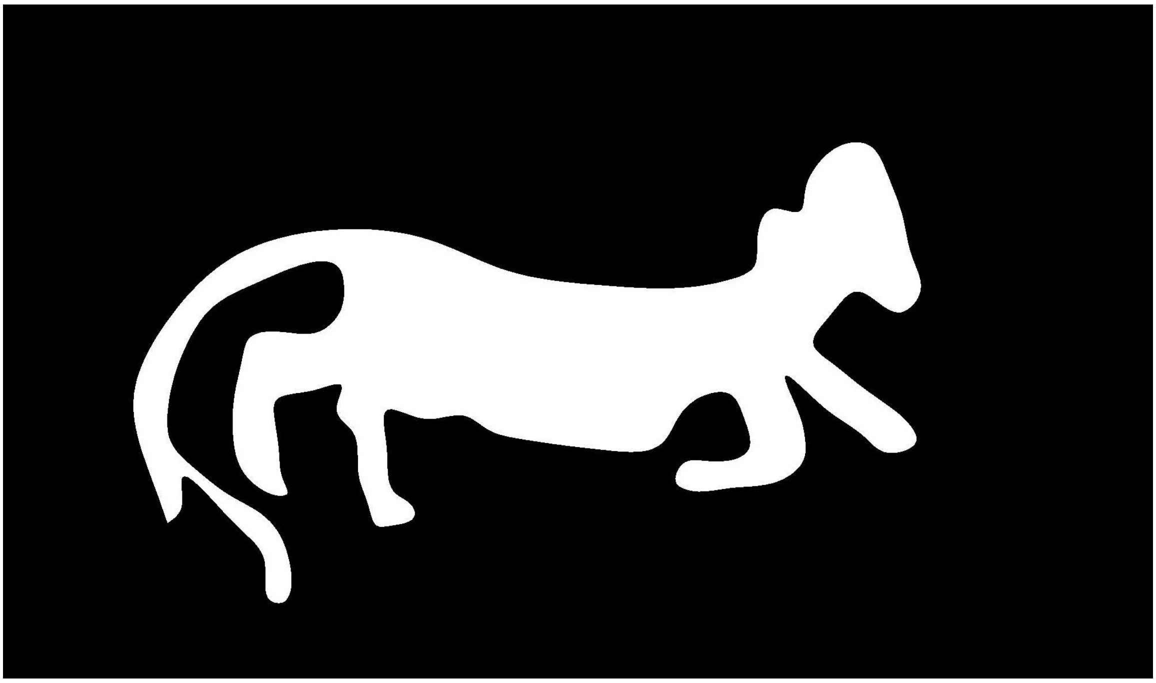


Fig. 4.27.35b Animal locomotion

This figure is showing an animal in locomotion. A sheep-like animal having the long tail is depicted in a moving posture. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.35a-4.27.35b).

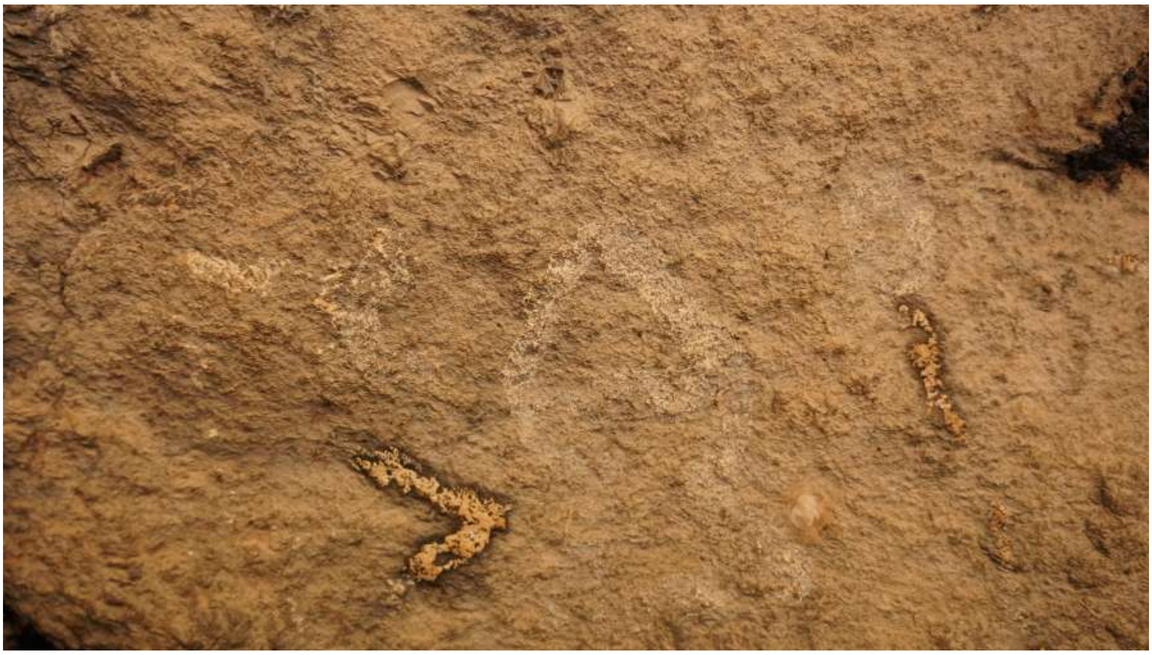


Fig. 4.27.36a Fish like sign

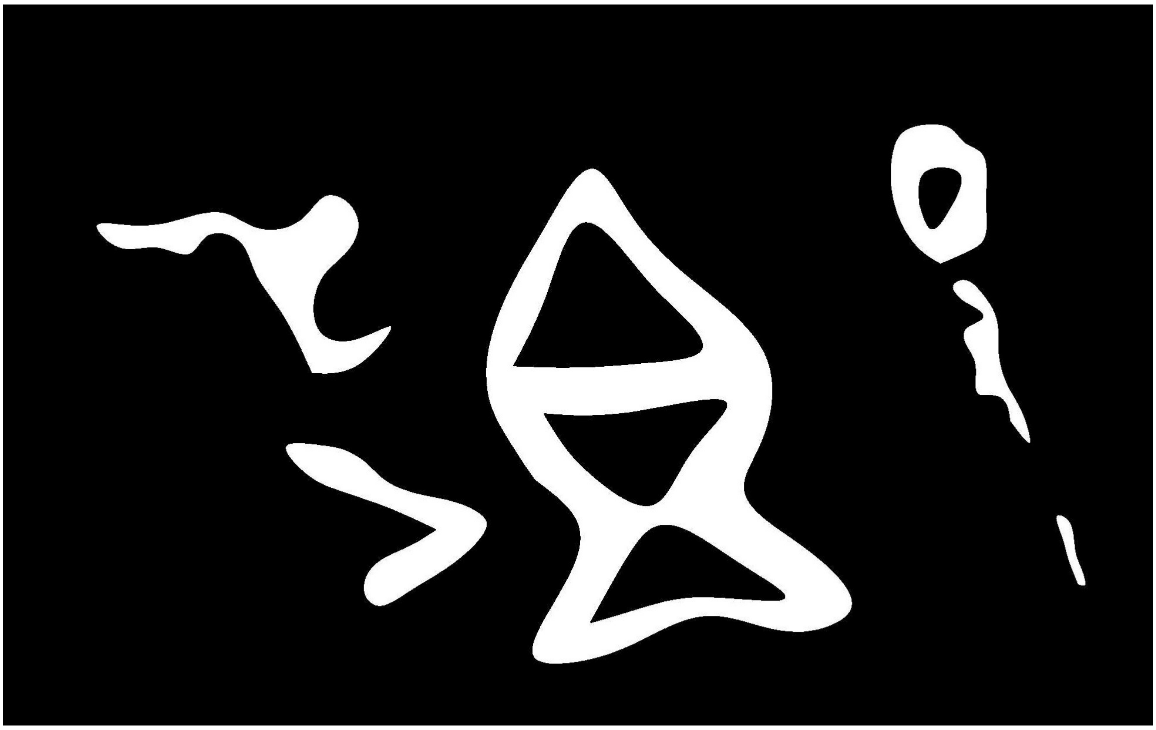


Fig. 4.27.36b Fish like sign

This picture is showing the hut with caret signs. The paintings are executed with white pigment. There are some signs drawn but in a little faded condition. (Fig. 4.27.36a-4.27.36b).

The figure is showing unidentifiable images. A man is shown in a standing posture and his left hand is raised. On the top, two unidentified signs are painted. The colour of the paintings is white (Fig. 4.27.37a-4.27.37b).

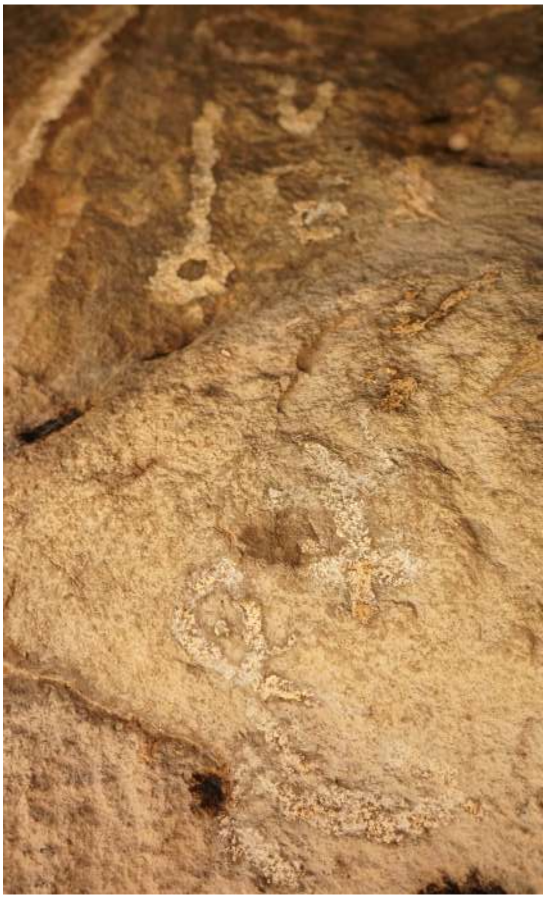


Fig. 4.27.37a Human with unidentified images

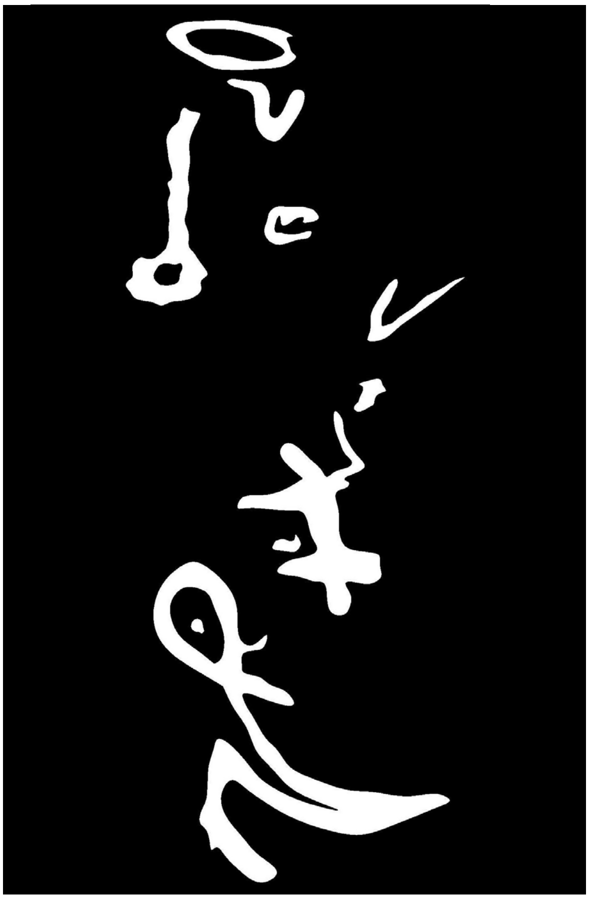


Fig. 4.27.37b Human with unidentified images

A man in a standing posture with some support on his back is depicted. The painting is done in thick lines. The colour of the paintings is white (Fig. 4.27.38a-4.27.38b).

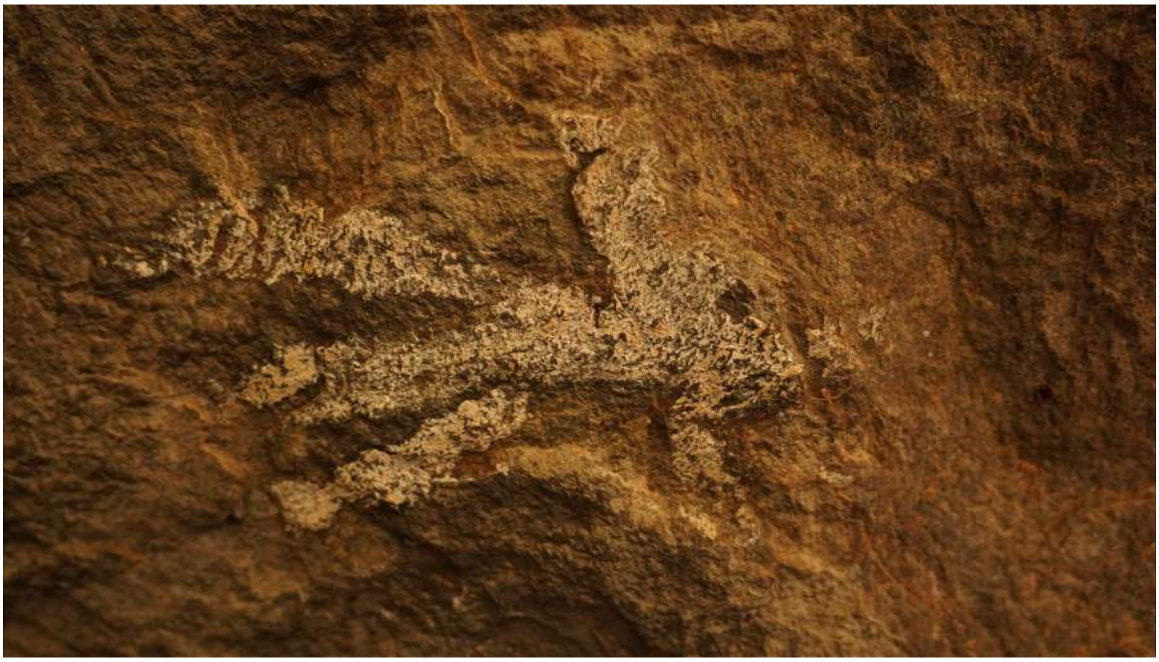


Fig. 4.27.38a Human

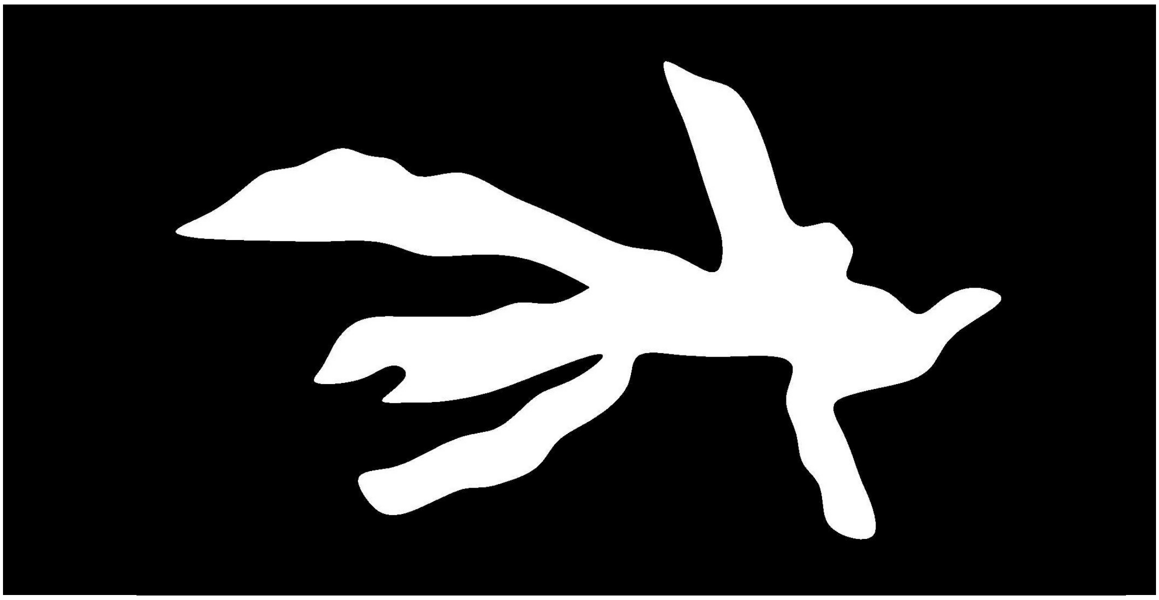


Fig. 4.27.38b Human

The hunters are sitting on an unidentified animal moving in different directions. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.39a-4.27.39b).

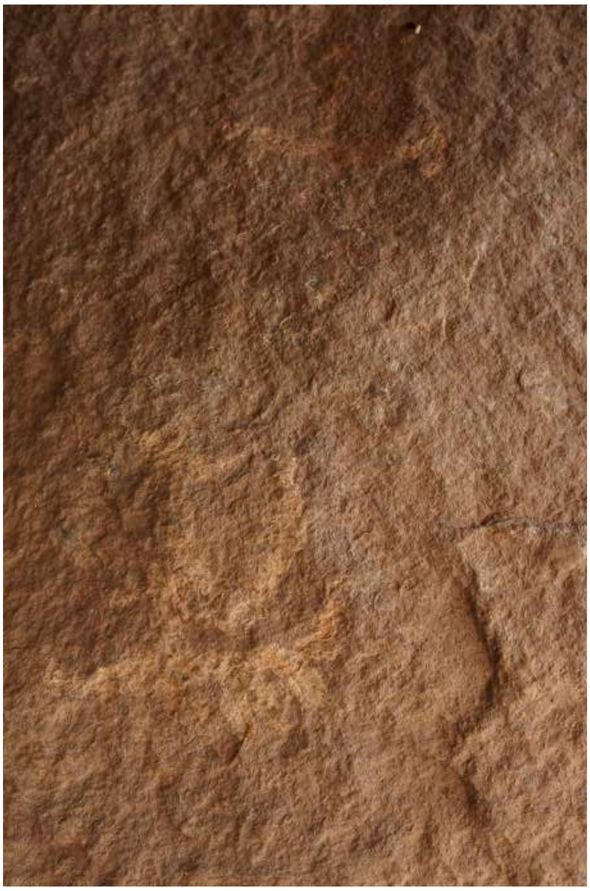


Fig. 4.27.39a Animal raiding

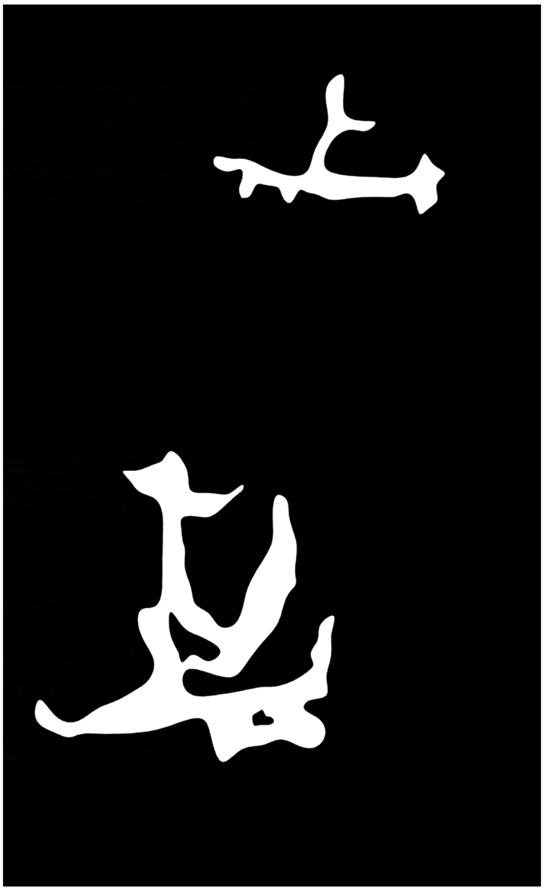


Fig. 4.27.39b Animal raiding

The figure represents a goat and a caret sign. The goat painting is an x-ray type. On the top, a caret-like sign is painted. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.40a-4.27.40b).

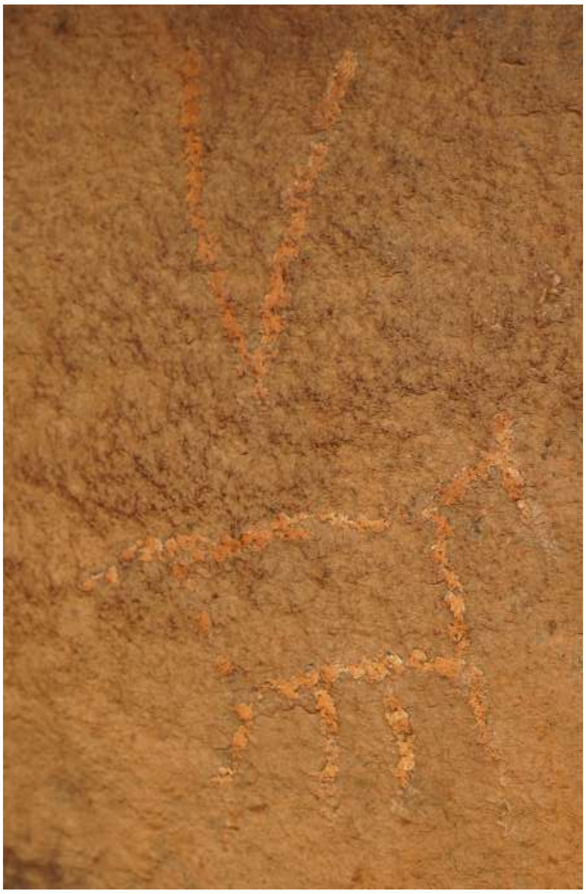


Fig. 4.27.40a *Goat and caret like sign*

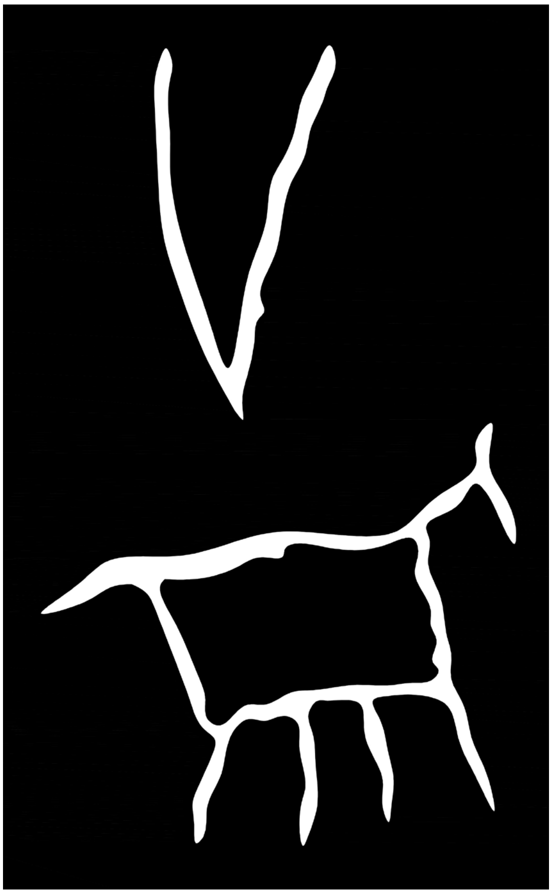


Fig. 4.27.40b *Goat and caret like sign*

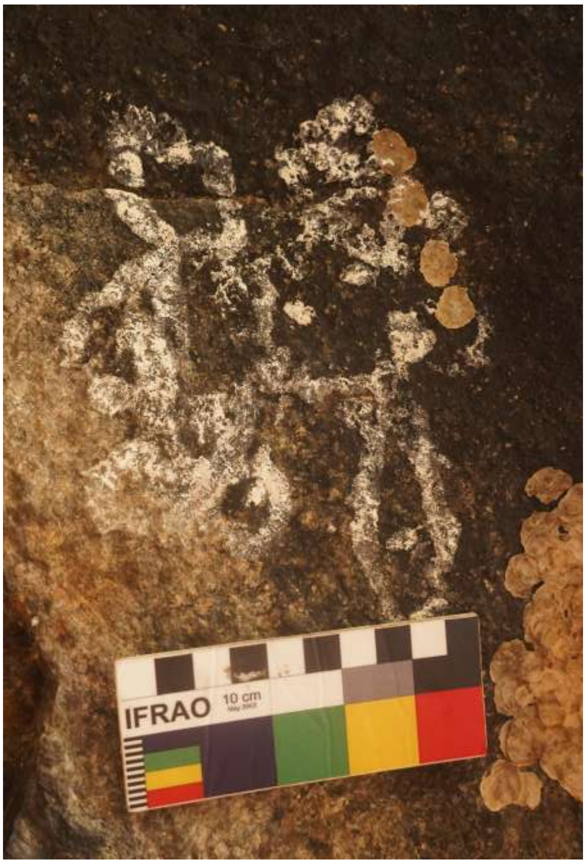


Fig. 4.27.41a *Unidentified signs*

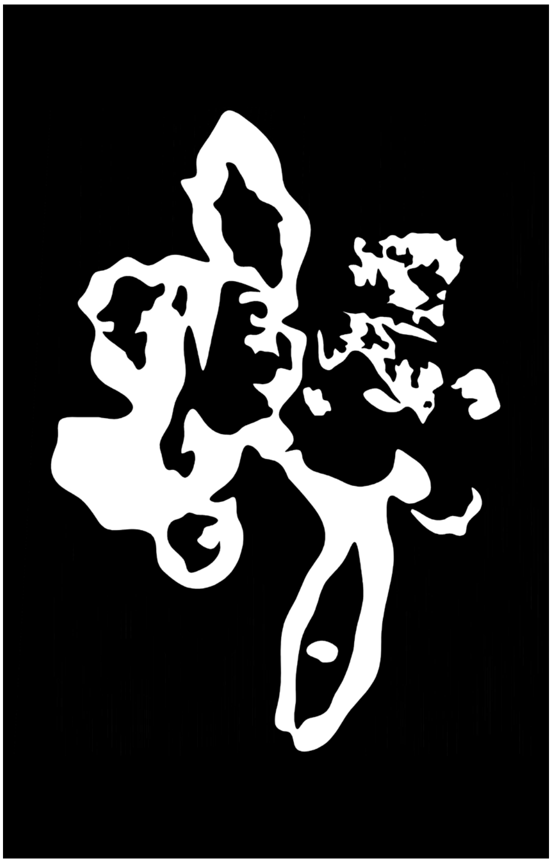


Fig. 4.27.41b *Unidentified signs*

The figure is showing an unidentified sign, which might be two humans interacting each other or involved in conflict. The painting is in white pigment (Fig. 4.27.41a-4.27.41b).

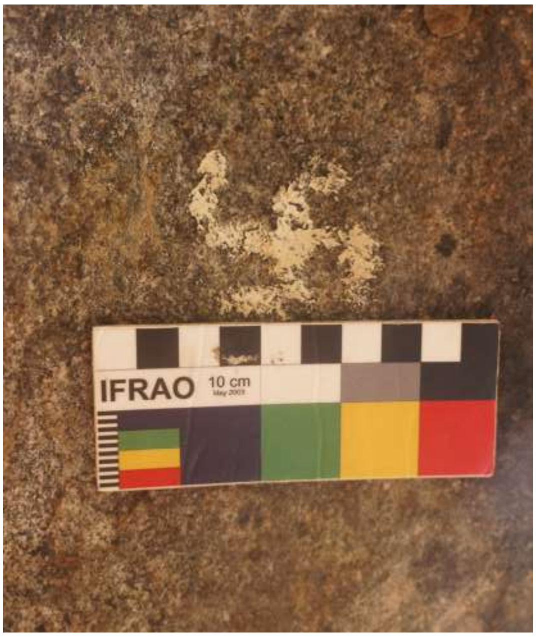


Fig. 4.27.42a Swastika

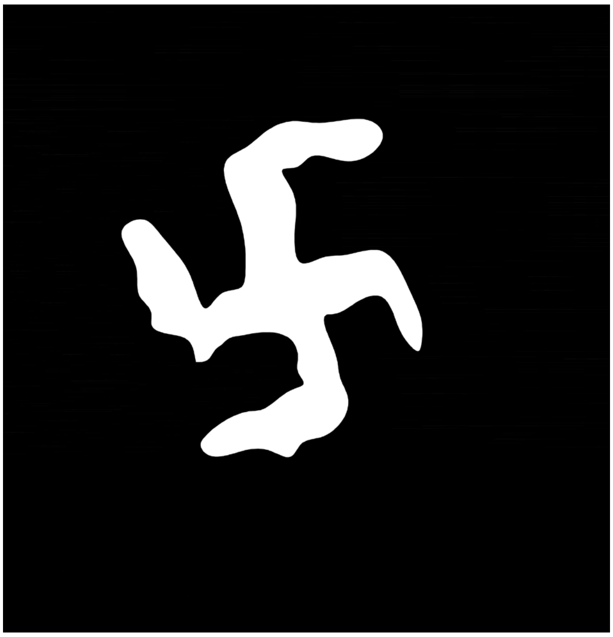


Fig. 4.27.42b Swastika

A Swastika is painted in a thick and prominent form. The painting is applied with white pigment (Fig. 4.27.42a-4.27.42b).

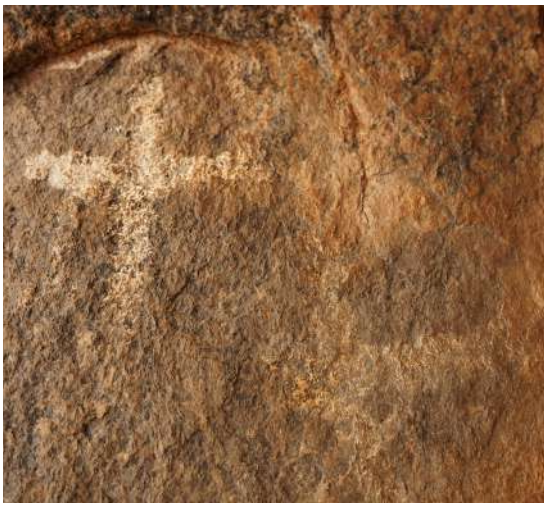


Fig. 4.27.43a "X" like signs

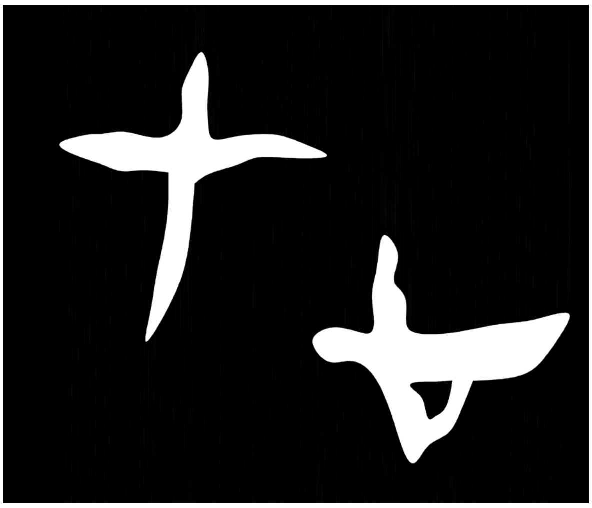


Fig. 4.27.43b "X" like signs

The figure is showing the "X" symbol. An "X" like sign is painted in thick form. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.43a-4.27.43b).

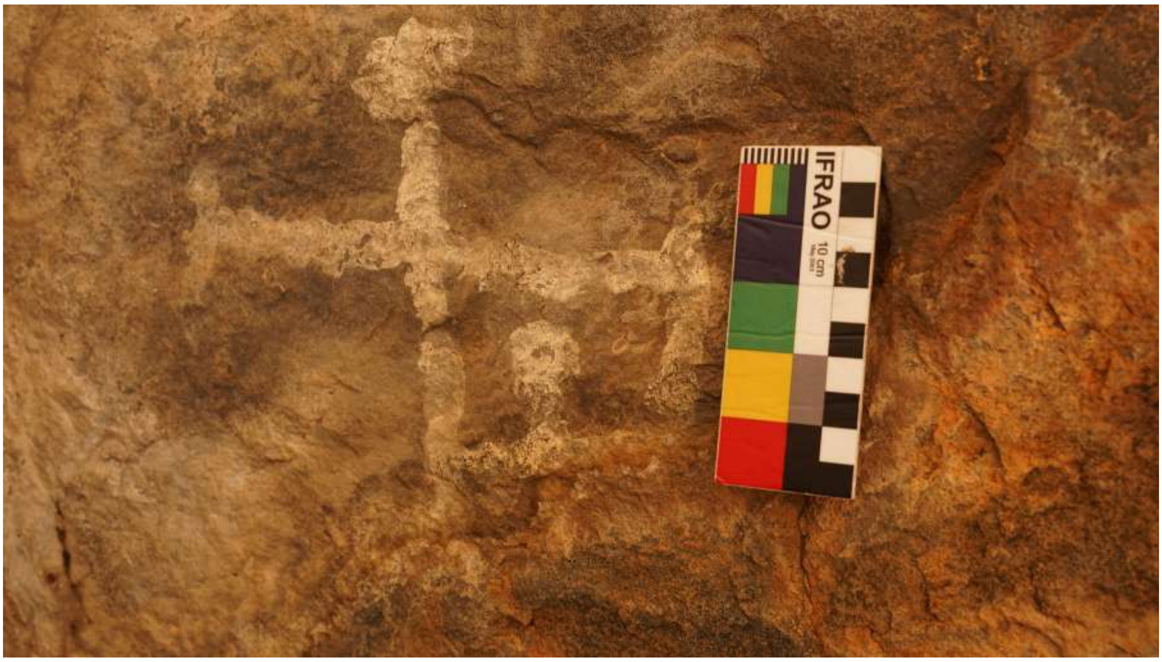


Fig. 4.27.44a Adult and child

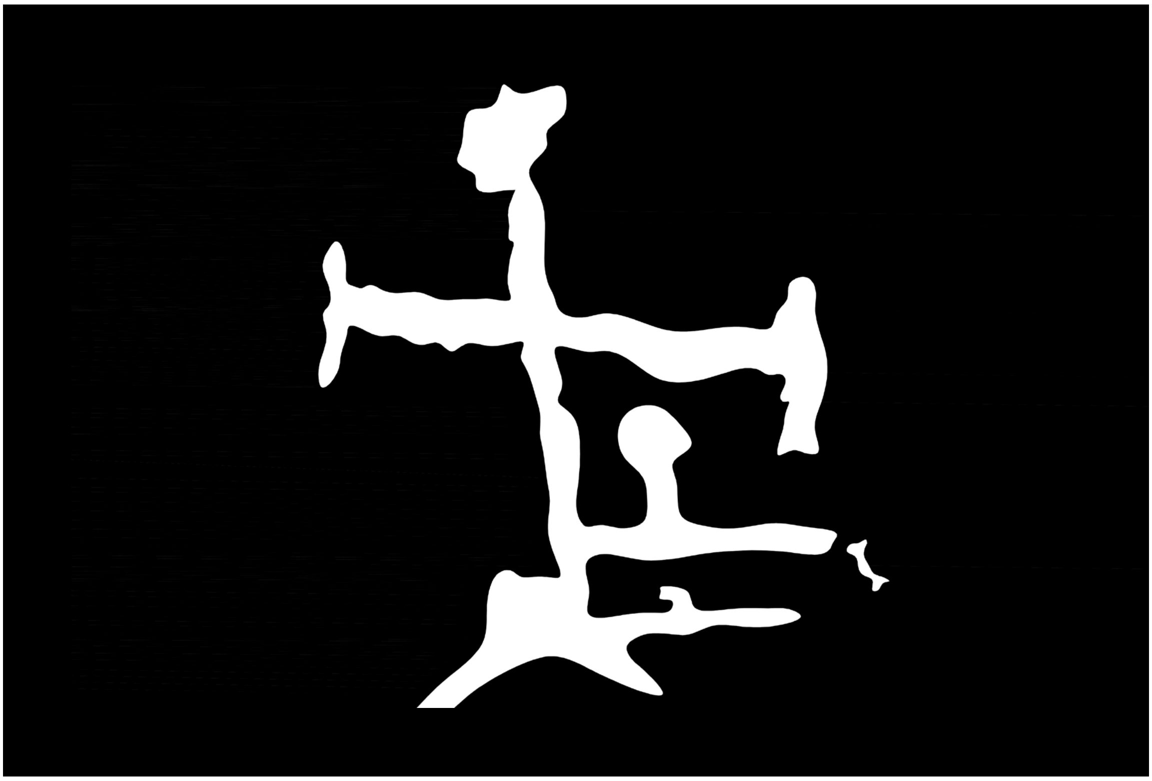


Fig. 4.27.44b Adult and child

The figure is showing an adult and a child. An adult is standing with a child. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.44a-4.27.44b).

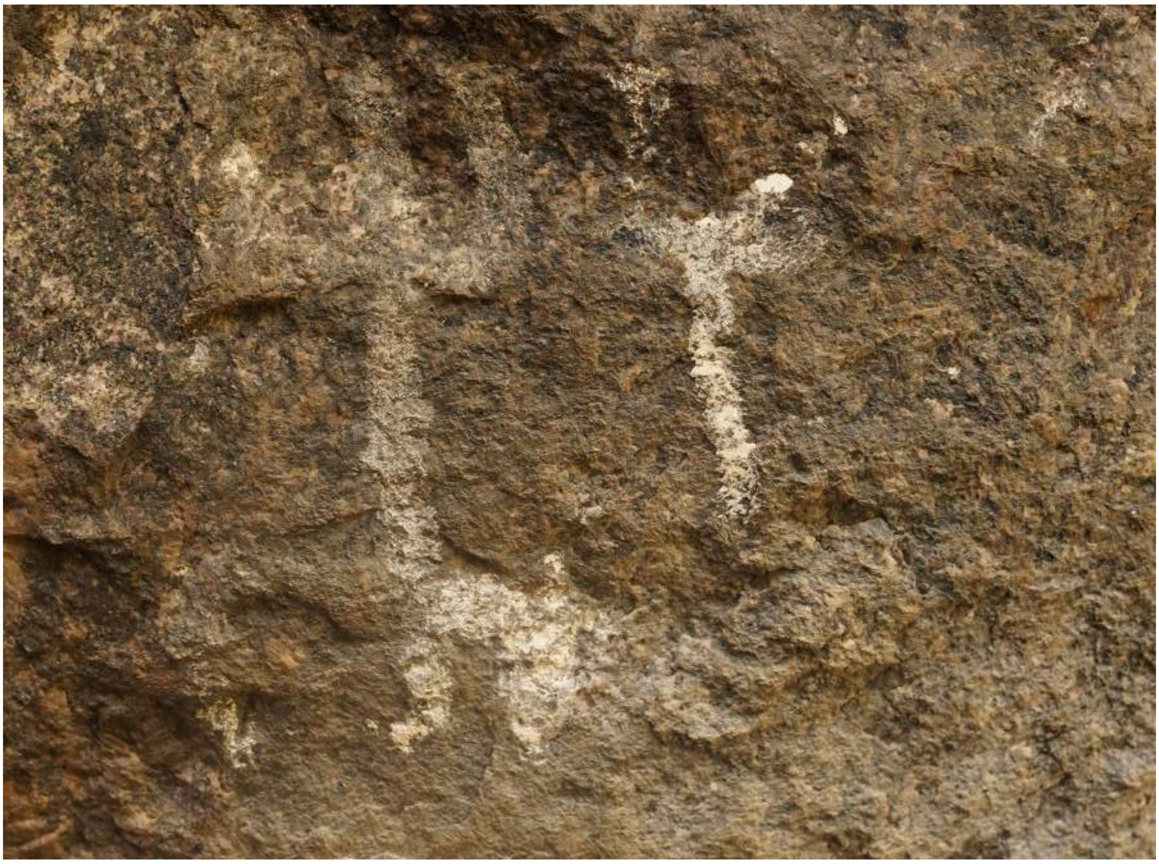


Fig. 4.27.45a Animal raiding

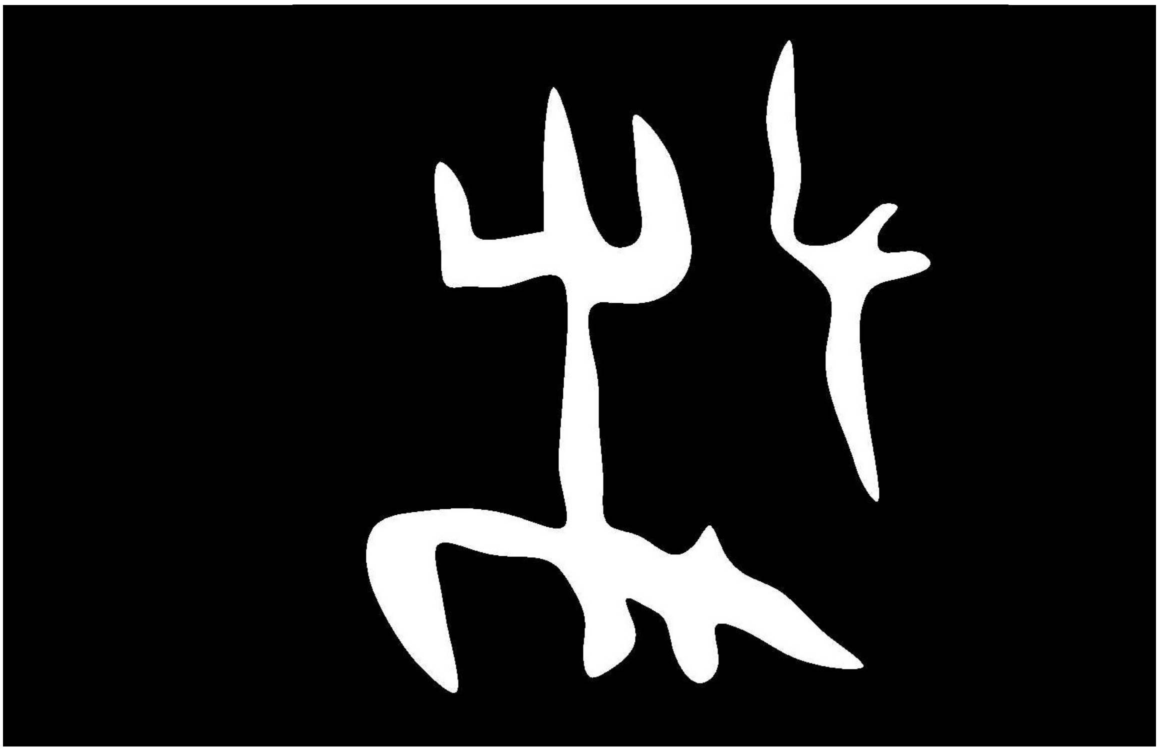


Fig. 4.27.45b Animal raiding

The figure is showing a hunter riding an animal. The animal ear/horn is well represented. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.45a-4.27.45b).

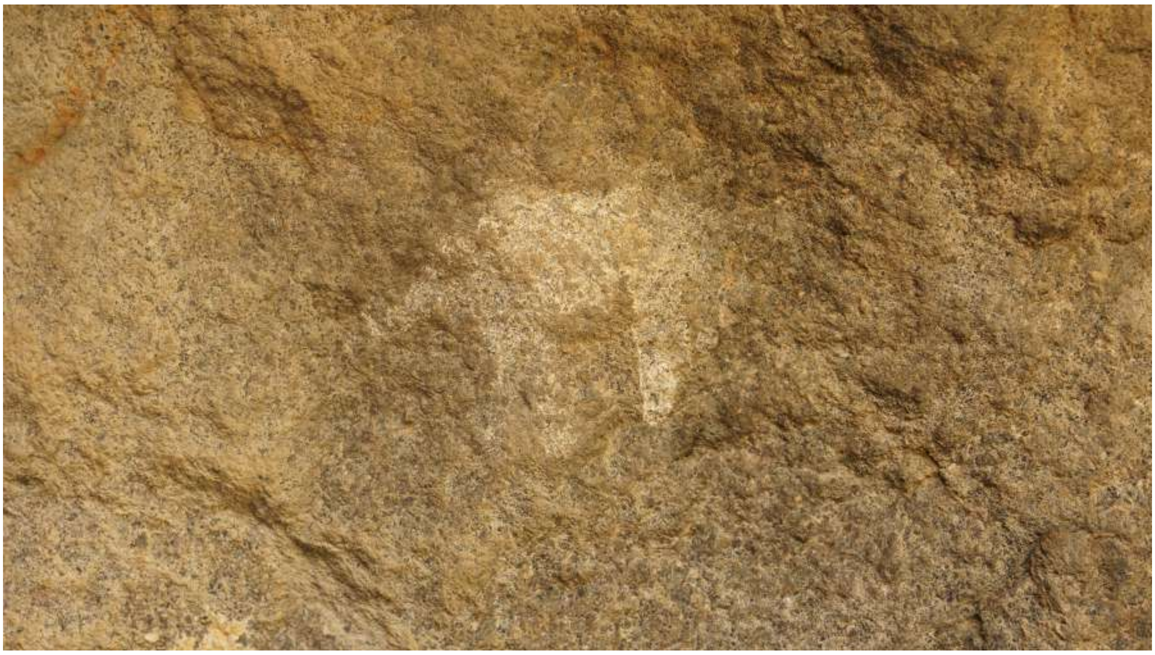


Fig. 4.27.46a An animal

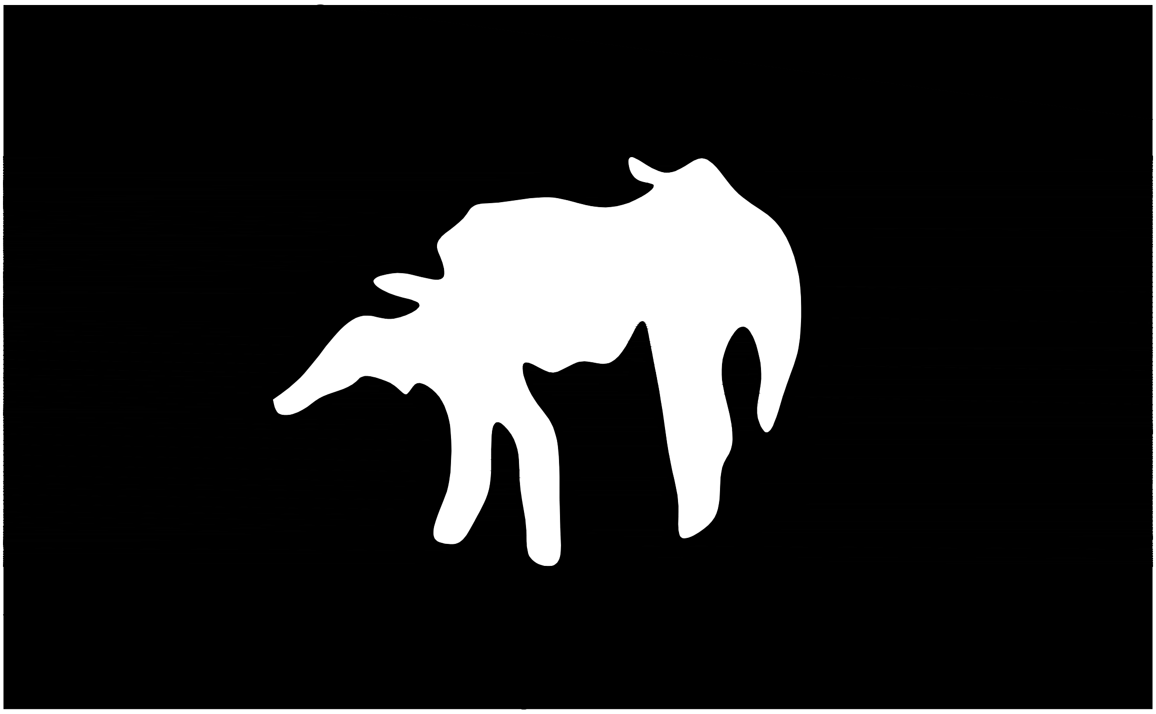


Fig. 4.27.46b An animal

The figure is showing an unidentified animal. The head portion of the animal is faded. The animal is having a robust body. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.46a-4.27.46b).

This figure is showing the hunter riding an animal. Some of the paintings are faded. At the top left the hunter is riding on an animal in which the head portion of the painting is faded. The top left and the bottom left also had hunters but the paintings are faded. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.47a-4.27.47b).

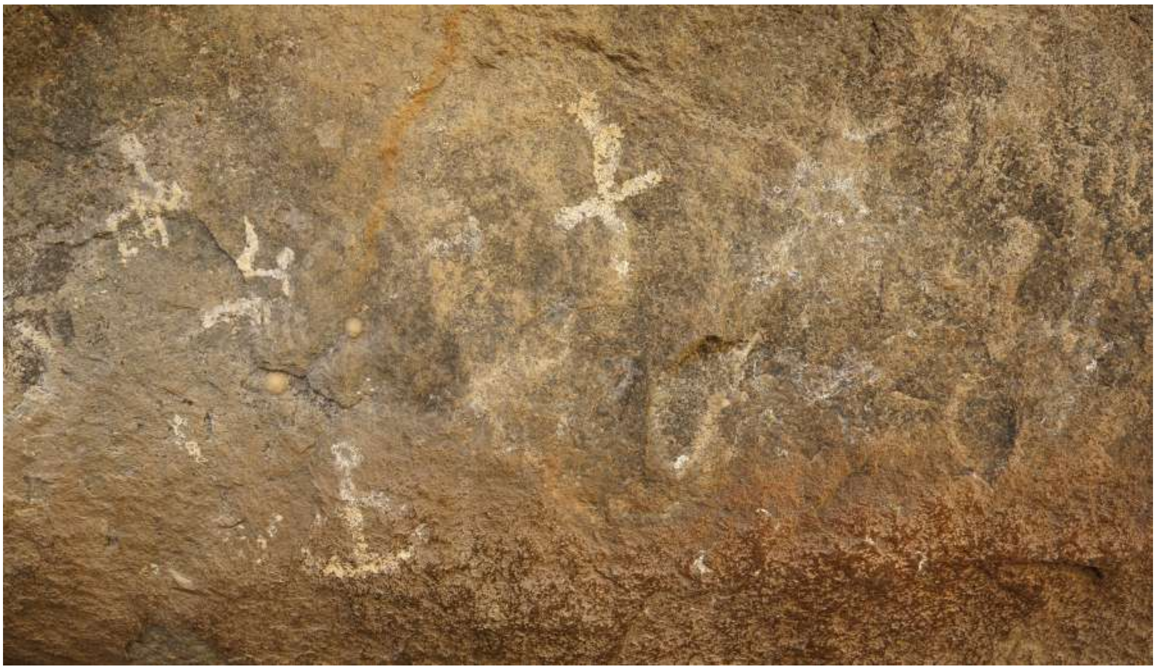


Fig. 4.27.47a Animal raiding and humans

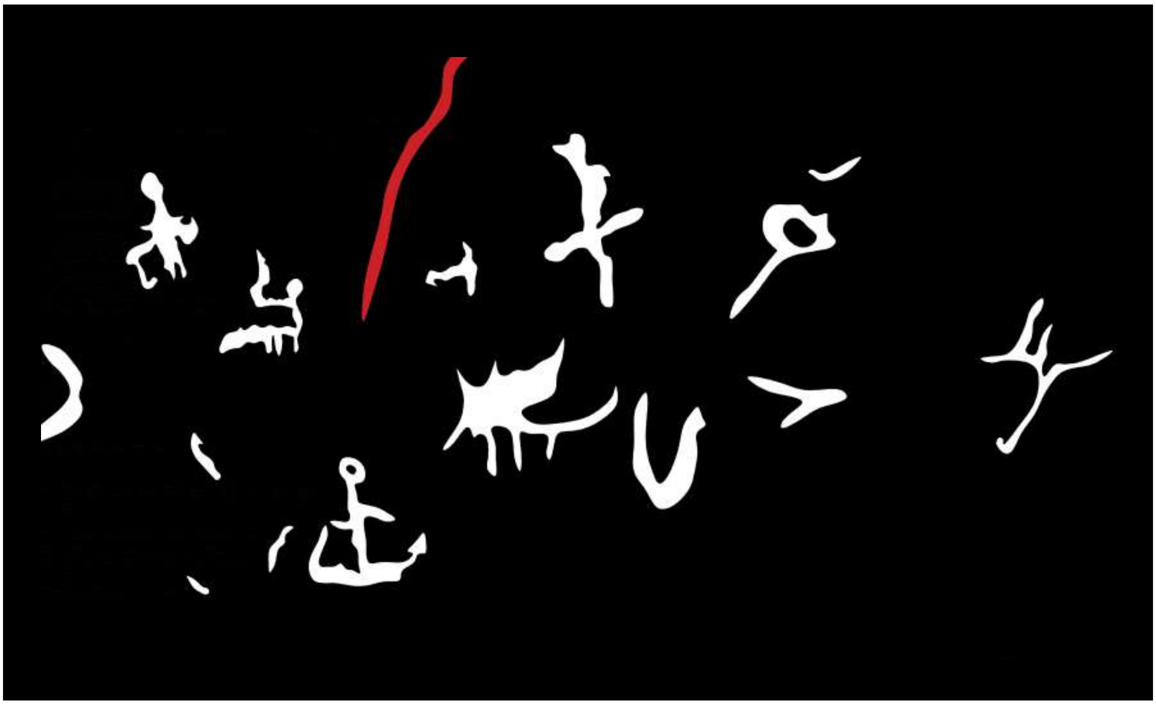


Fig. 4.27.47b Animal raiding and humans

Two children are standing under the guardian. The guardian holds shield-like object in his right arm. A child having the hair sign which resembles the female character. An animal and a trident are painted on the left side. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.48a-4.27.48b).

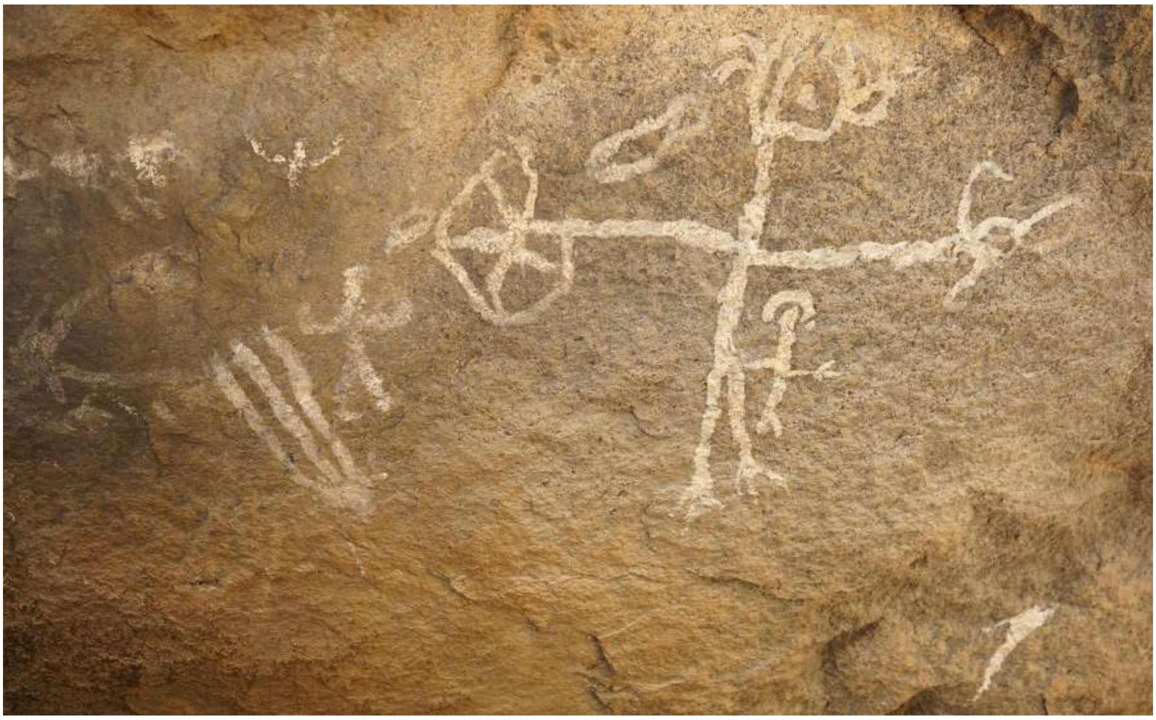


Fig. 4.27.48a Guardian and children

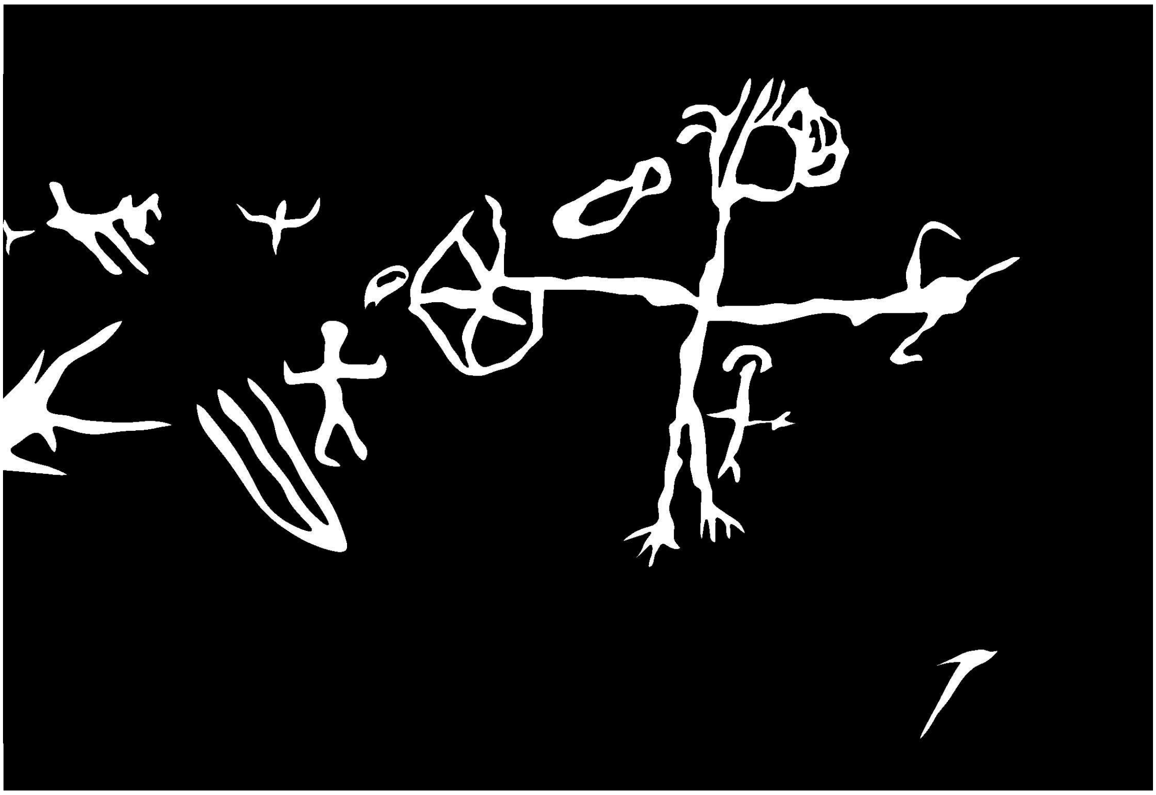


Fig. 4.27.48b Guardian and children

The figure shows a bow and arrow. It is also similar to leaf like plant, may be with edges having a bud. The painting is executed in white (Fig. 4.27.49a-4.27.49b).

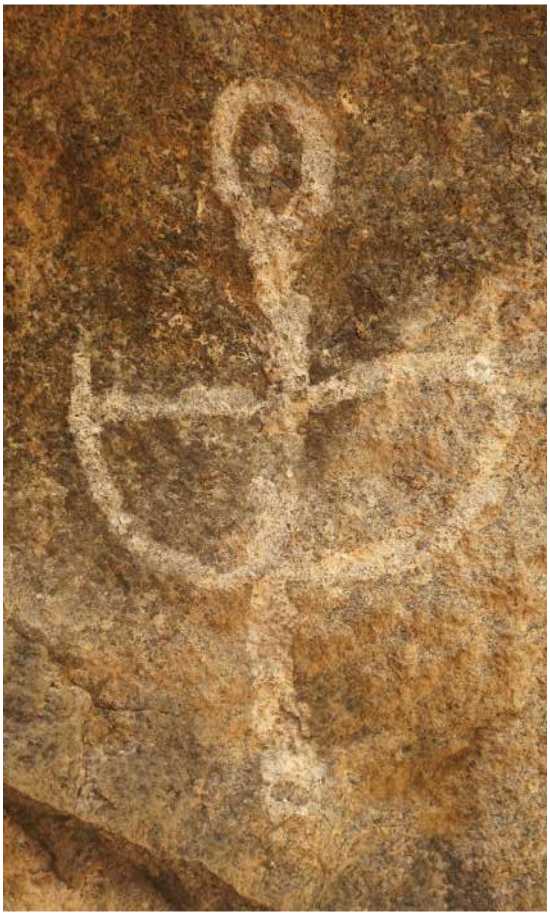


Fig. 4.27.49a Bow and arrow

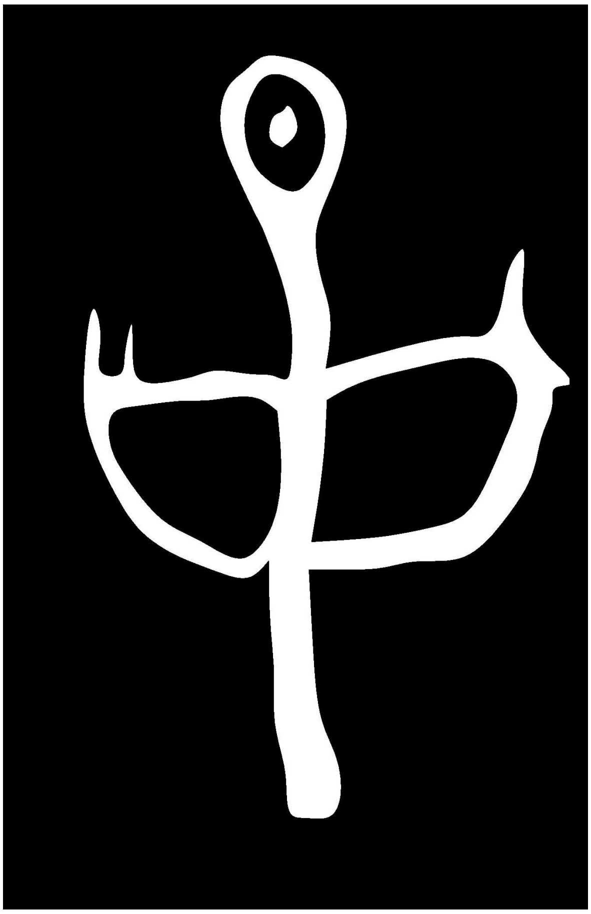


Fig. 4.27.49b Bow and arrow

The figure depicts an unidentified sign. An animal having two legs and the others are faded. The painting is in thick form. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.27.50a-4.27.50b).

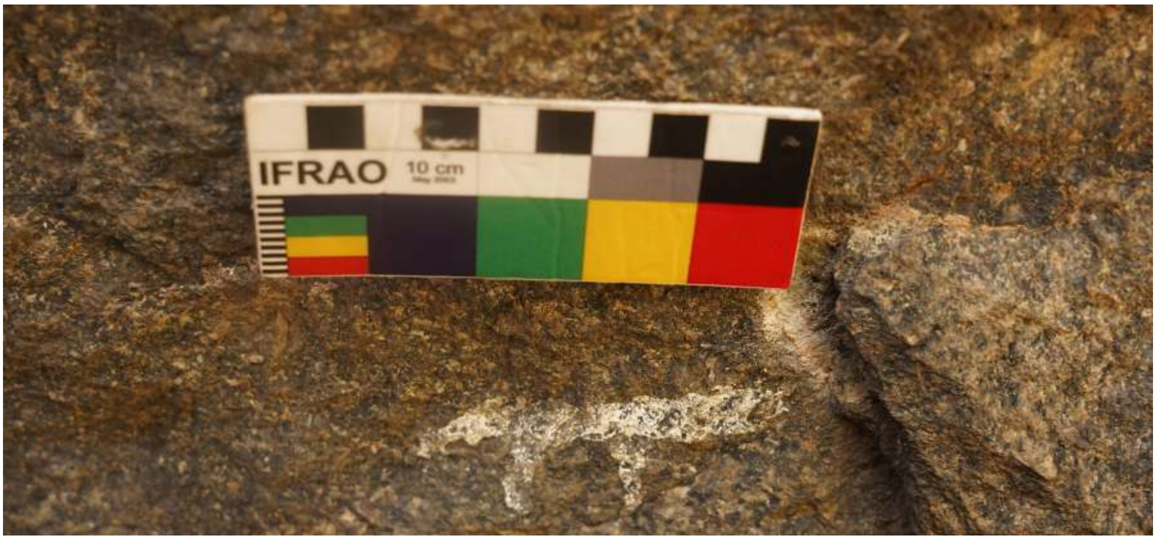


Fig. 4.27.50a Animal like sign

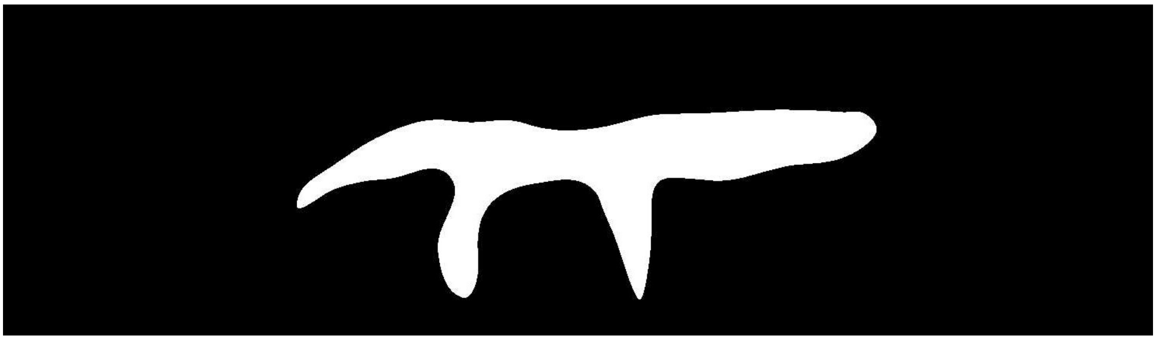
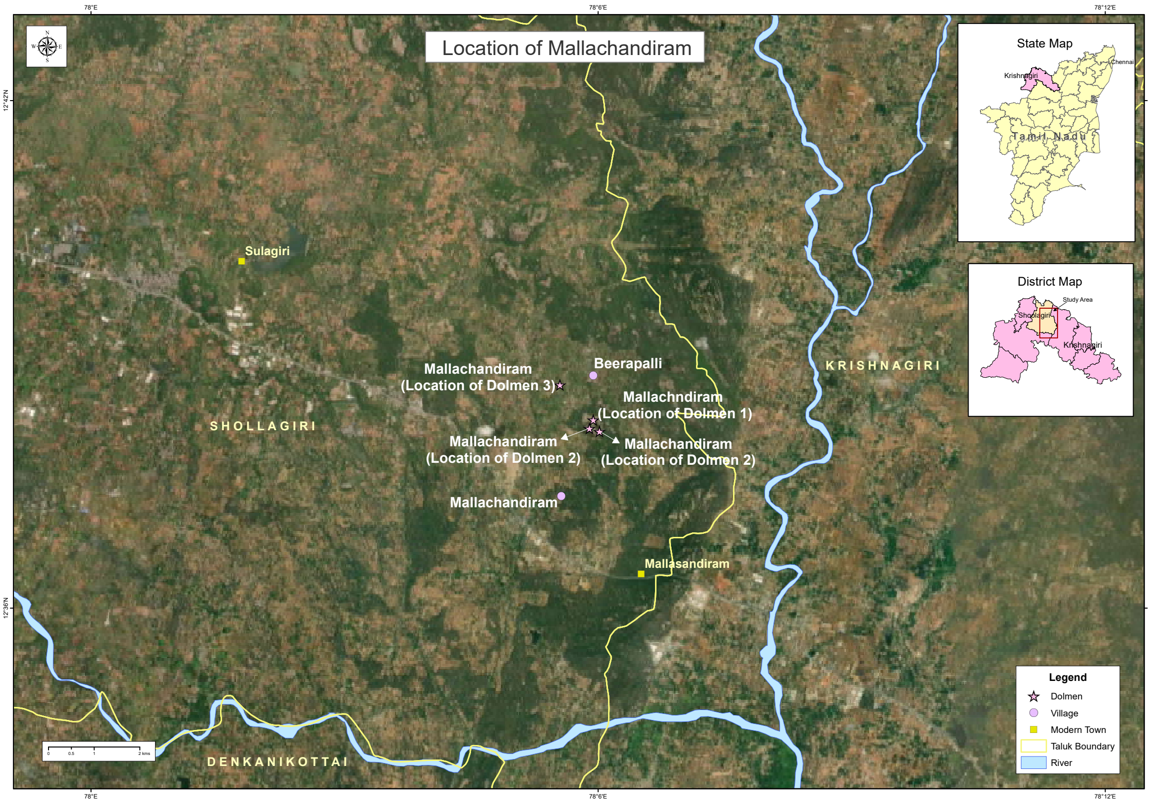


Fig. 4.27.50b *Animal like sign*

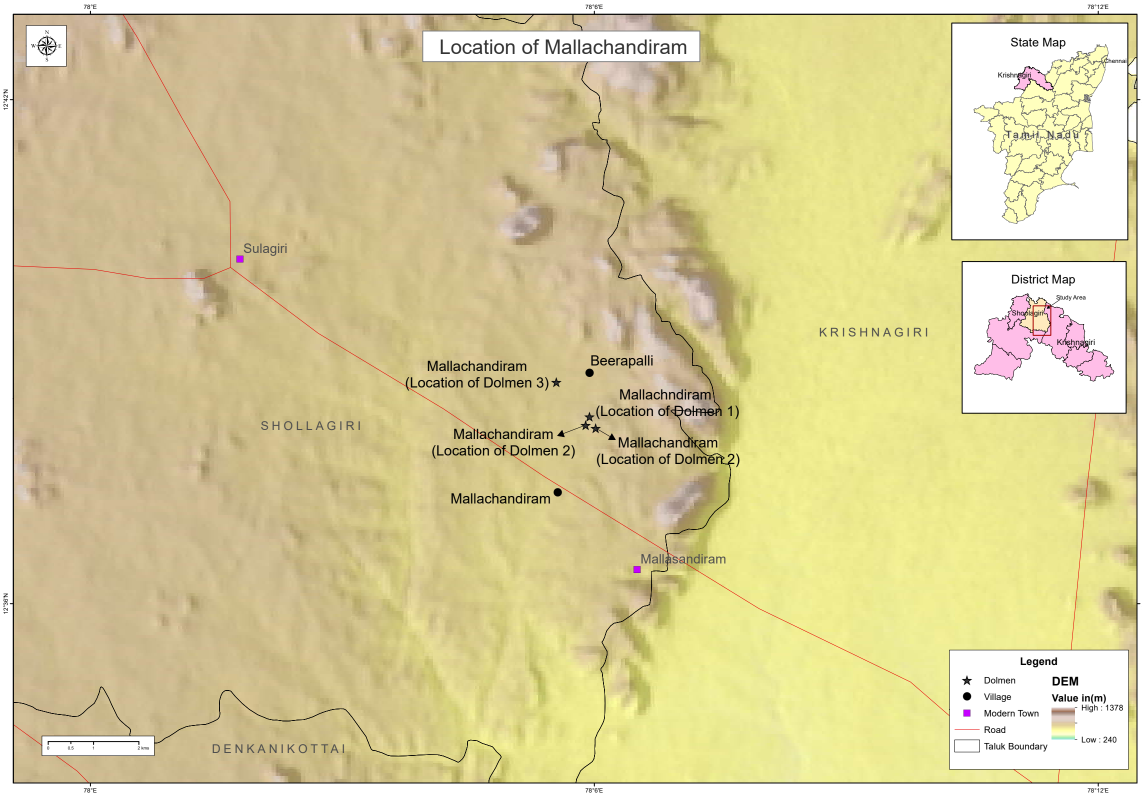
4.28. Mallachandiram

Mallachandiram (12. 63713 N; 78. 09906E) is an Iron Age megalithic settlement located on the Krishnagiri - Beerpalli road at a distance of 19 km from Krishnagiri and 4 km from Samulpallam. Samulpallam lies on the Krishnagiri - Bangalore road at a distance of 15 km from Krishnagiri (Map 4.28.1-4.28.2). White paintings of human riding animals, holding weapons like swords, shield, and trident figures were noticed on the orthostats of dolmens (Fig. 4.28.1-4.28.5

The Iron Age dolmens locally known as panduvurar koil are found on the hilltop. More than 200 dolmens could be identified on the plateau surface of the hill. Dolmens were constructed from granite and Khondalite gneisses rocks. It is to be noted that the rock slabs are available only at the top of these hills. All along the hill slopes, due to the rock fills and rolled boulders these sheets are not exposed. At the foothills, owing to the pediment fills the bed rocks are buried.


Location of Mallachandiram
78°E
78°6'E
78°12'E
12°42'N
12°36'N
Sulagiri
SHOLLAGIRI
KRISHNAGIRI
DENKANIKOTTAI
Beerapalli
Mallachandiram (Location of Dolmen 3)
Mallachndiram (Location of Dolmen 1)
Mallachandiram (Location of Dolmen 2)
Mallachandiram (Location of Dolmen 2)
Mallachandiram
Mallasandiram
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Shoolagiri
Krishnagiri
Legend
Dolmen
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.28.1 *Location of the dolmens*


Location of Mallachandiram
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Shoolagiri
Krishnagiri
Sulagiri
KRISHNAGIRI
SHOLLAGIRI
DENKANIKOTTAI
Beerapalli
Mallachandiram (Location of Dolmen 3)
Mallachndiram (Location of Dolmen 1)
Mallachandiram (Location of Dolmen 2)
Mallachandiram (Location of Dolmen 2)
Mallachandiram
Mallasandiram
Legend
Dolmen
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°E
78°6'E
78°12'E
12°42'N
12°36'N

Map 4.28.2 Location of the dolmens

Only at the crests of the hillocks, the conditions for exfoliation are conducive. Hence, it is apparent that the ancients selected these sites for the construction of dolmens. It is also interesting to note that dolmens are constructed exactly on the exposed bedrock areas and no evidence of the slabs being transported down to the slopes or plains. The availability of slabs is the main factor influencing the choice of site for dolmen construction. The height of the dolmen varied from 1 m to 2.50 m.

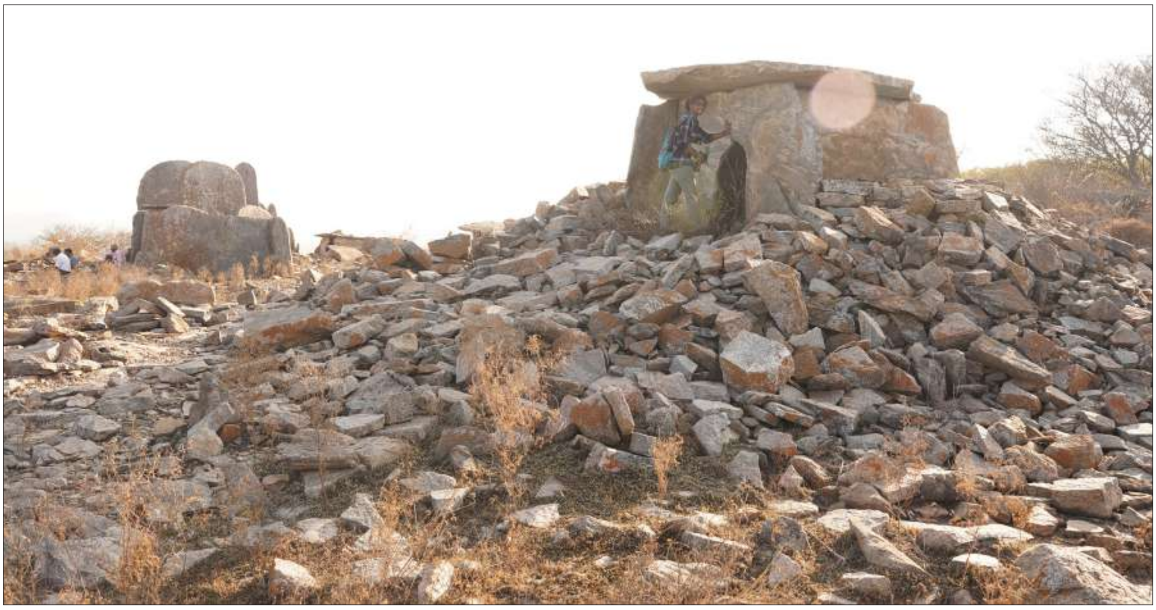


Fig. 4.28.1 General view of the dolmen

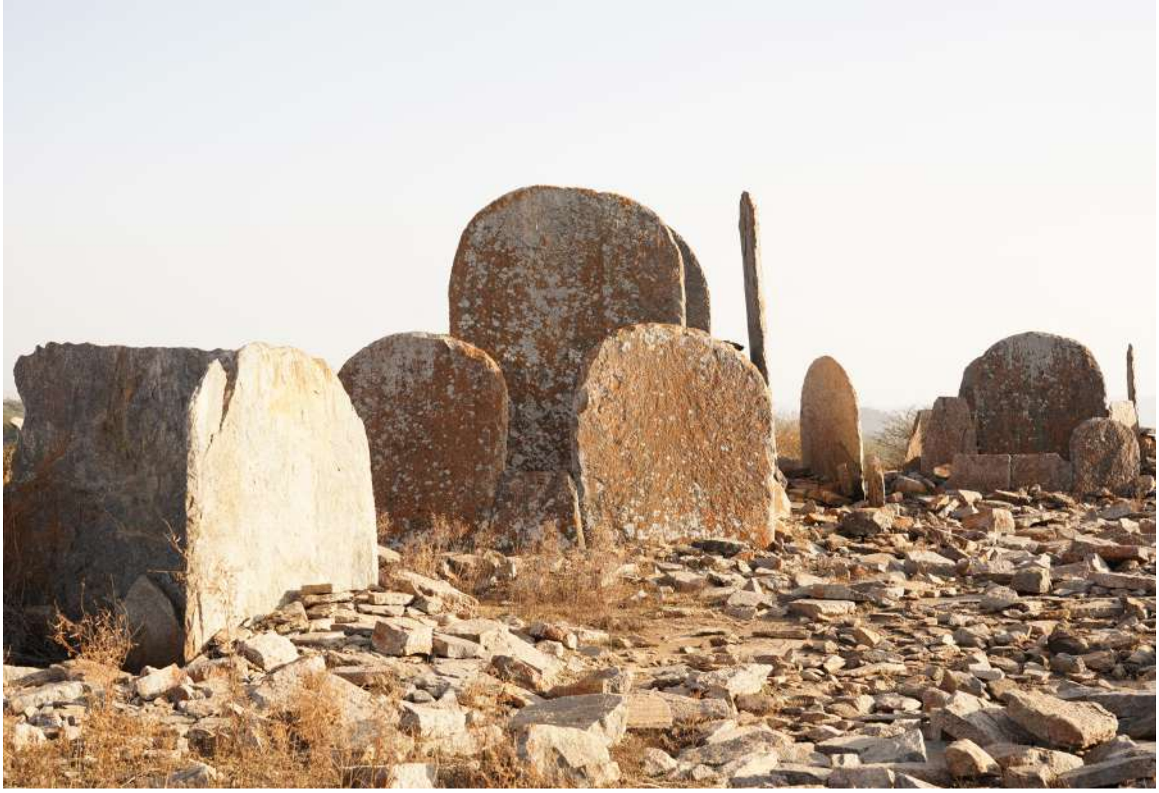


Fig. 4.28.2 General view of the dolmen

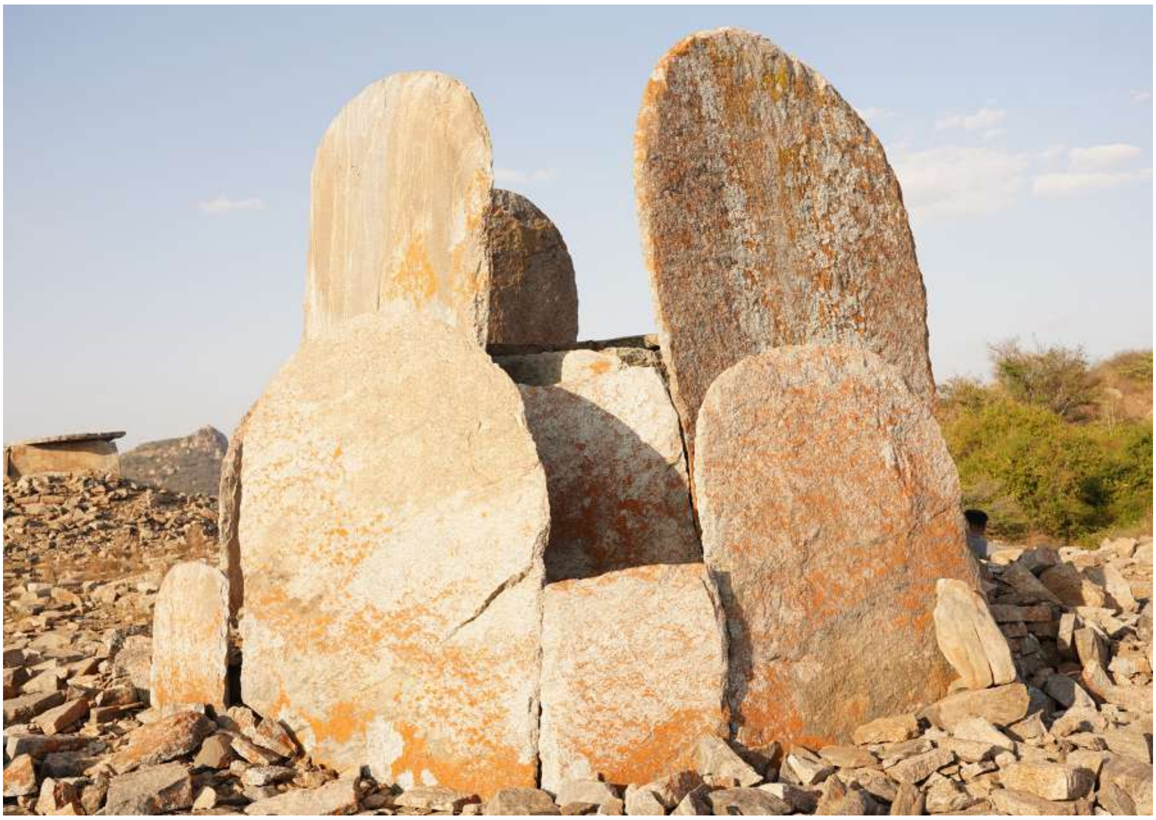


Fig. 4.28.3 General view of the dolmen

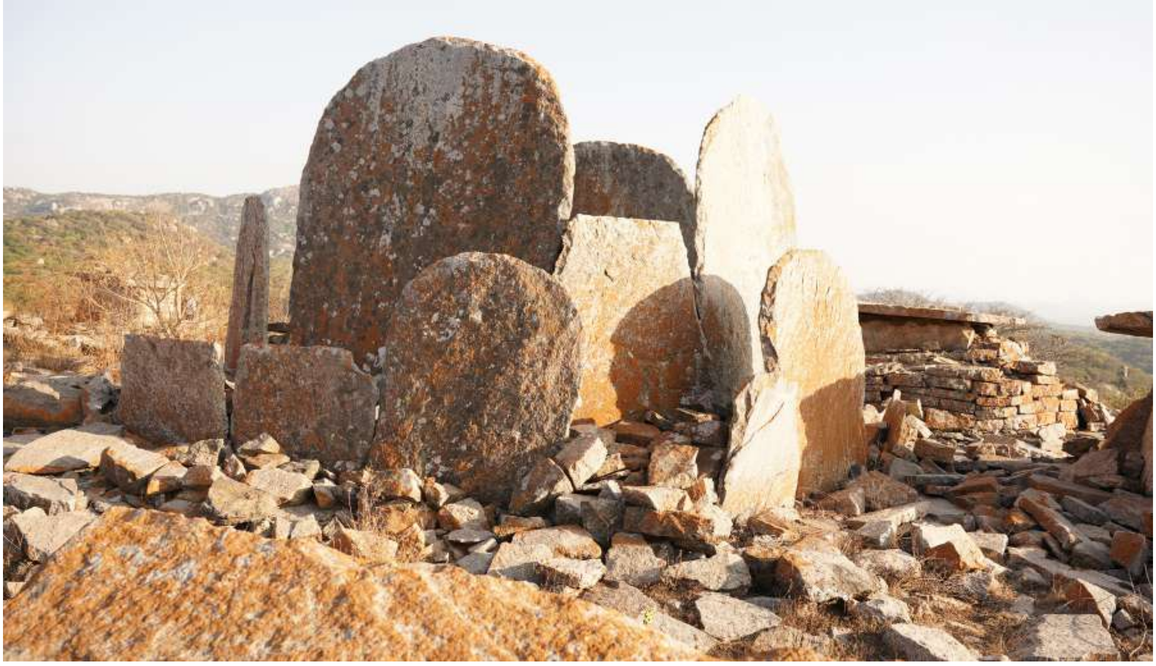


Fig. 4.28.4 General view of the dolmen

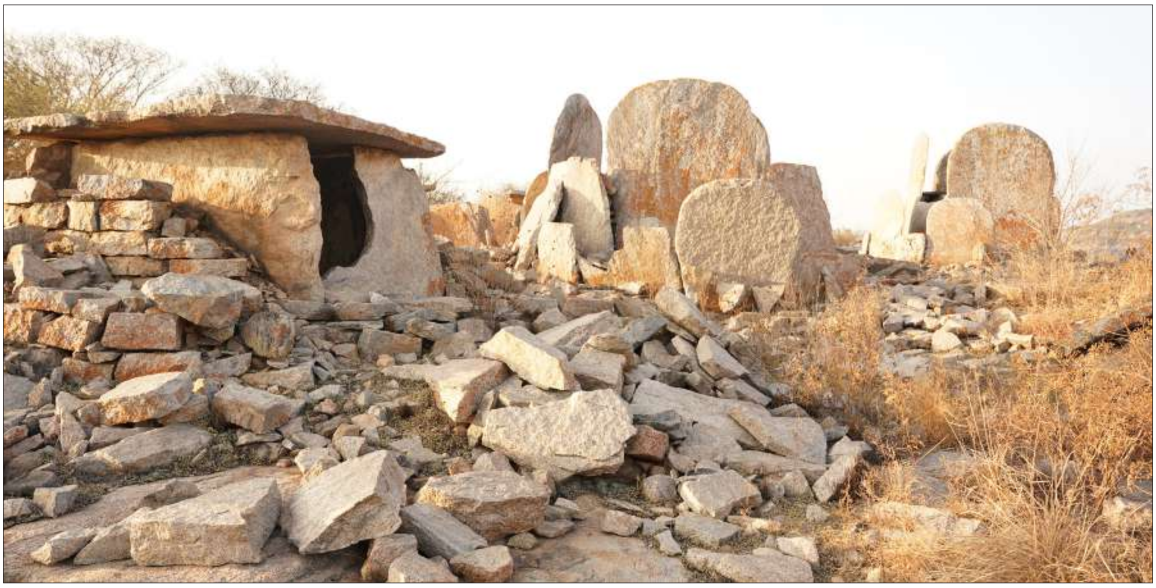


Fig. 4.28.5 General view of the dolmen

Description

As aforesaid, white paintings are found on the interior surface of the western orthostat i.e. against the porthole. Some paintings are also seen on other orthostats as well. It seems they executed the painting on the western orthostat first and followed by other orthostats

Dolmen I

The western slab had two human figurines.

Dolmen II

The western slab had a human figure with an animal at his feet. Another symbol had a vertical stroke with 16 small horizontal strokes and ends with a circular top.

Dolmen III

The southern slab has two unidentified symbols.

Dolmen IV

The western slab has a human in which the legs and hands were shown by three-branched strokes.

Dolmen V

One figure is shown with a man holding a bow and arrow above his head. Two other symbols are unidentified.

Dolmen VI

The western slab has a number of symbols. In the first set, two human figures are shown side by side with one plant just above them. Another set has a man holding a bow and arrow above his head. Next to this, an unidentified symbol is observed. The third set has a human figure, one plant and one house-like structure. The fourth set has a man with an animal, a plant above the mountain or a house and a man with an animal.

Dolmen VII

On the southern orthostat, there are three human figures of which two are shown with raised hands. Just below this, a house and two men with an animal each are depicted.

Dolmen VIII

Four symbols are noticed on the northern orthostat. Three symbols are identical, having a man riding or holding an animal, and the left hand holds a disc. The third is a human figure. The fourth symbol is unidentified.

Dolmen IX

Three men are noticed on the western slab in which two are standing and the third is riding on the animal by holding a disc in the raised left hand.

The images represented in the dolmens consist of hunters with weapons, animals, animal riders and fish-like signs could be seen in the Mallachandiram paintings.

Panel Description

In this dolmen, five human figures are drawn in white pigment in linear form. Most of them are holding weapons in their hands. A few more images are found in damaged conditions (Fig. 4.28.6a-4.28.6b).

Here, three images are seen. A man is riding on an animal. In the top row, on the right side, a man is riding a horse. It appears that the rider belonged to a chieftain's family. Opposite to this painting, a huge animal is shown in thick form, it looks like a tiger, nails in the legs are clearly seen. Behind him a human figure is drawn as a stick figure. Below this, a man riding an animal, probably a horse. A few human figures are also seen, but mostly in damaged condition. Based on colour pigments, stroke and styles, these are all drawn by different artists at different times (Fig. 4.28.7a-4.28.7b).

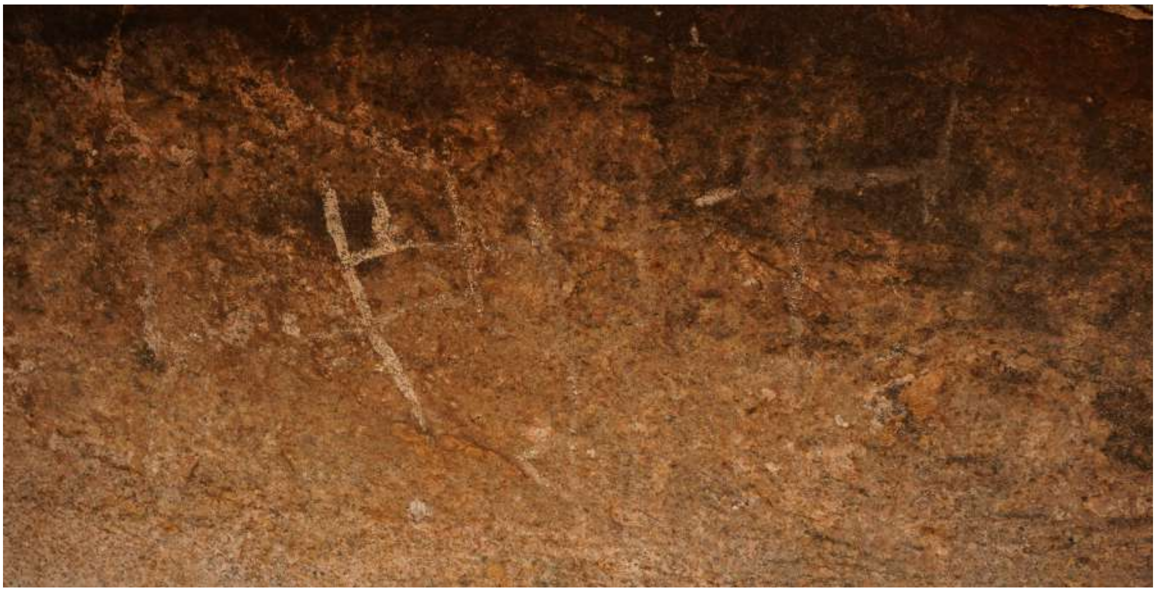


Fig. 4.28.6a Hunters with the weapons

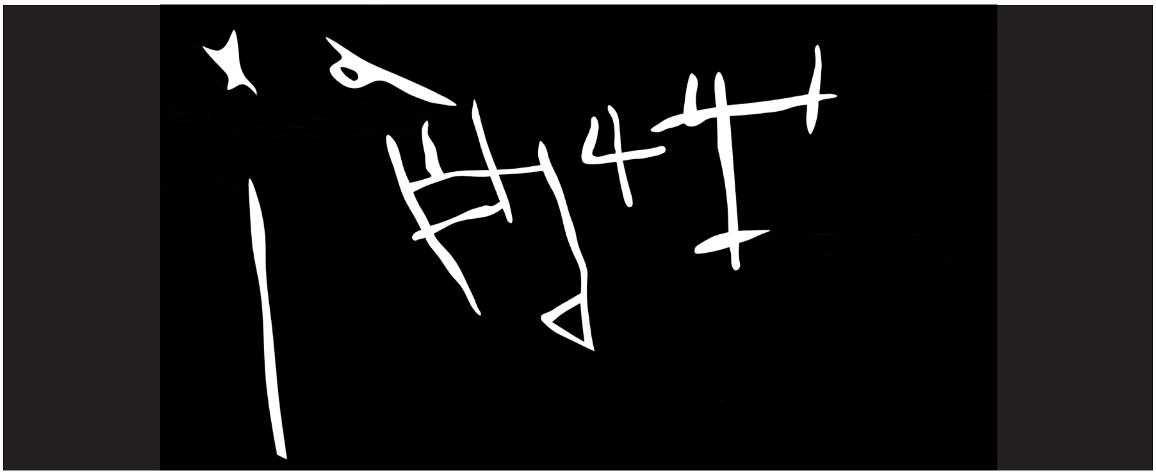


Fig. 4.28.6b Hunters with the weapons

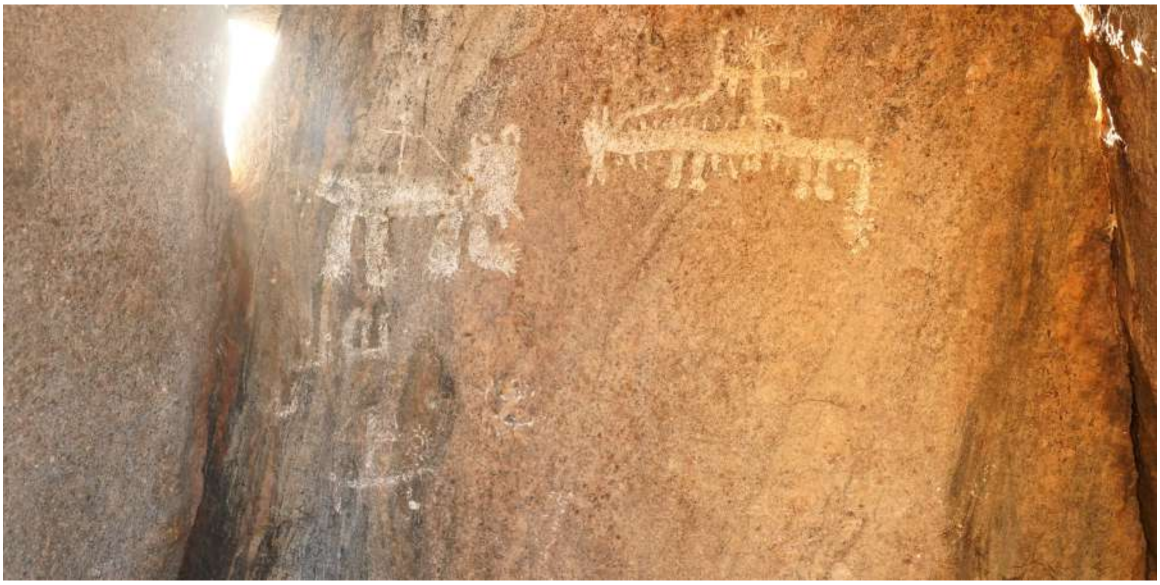


Fig. 4.28.7a Animal and animal rider

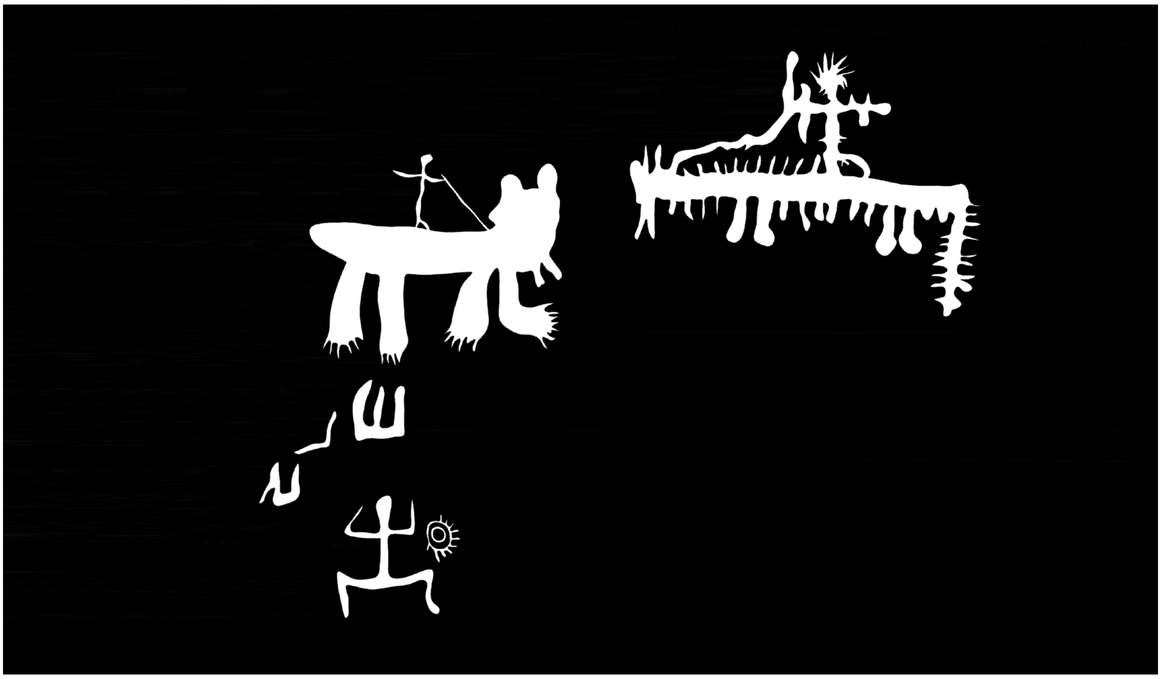


Fig. 4.28.7b *Animal and animal rider*

In this dolmen, a few human figures are shown riding on horses, holding a sword and shield like weapons fighting with human figures on the ground. In the top, a human figure is riding on a horse, raising his hands, opposite to him another man is standing on the ground. Below this, on the right, a human figure is riding on a horse with weapons, In front of him a horse is shown falling down. A few human figures are shown in opposite directions. Below these compositions, another human figure is shown riding on a horse with weapons, opposite to him few warriors standing on the ground and fighting against him (Fig. 4.28.8a-4.28.8b). On the whole, this composition represents a battle scene.

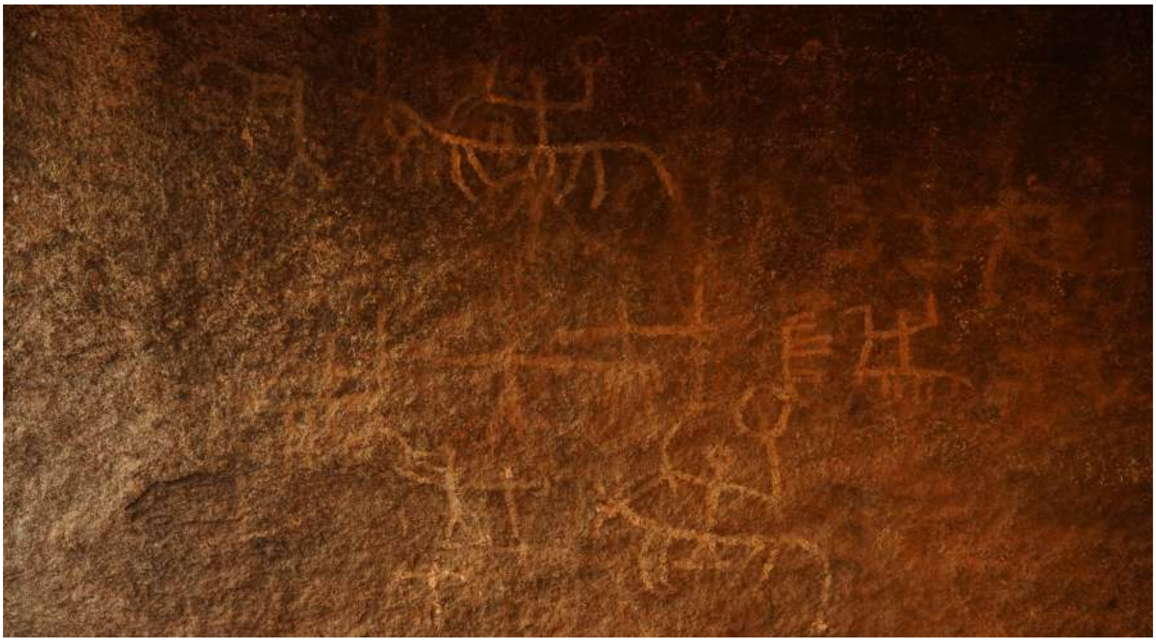


Fig. 4.28.8a *Humans and animal riders*

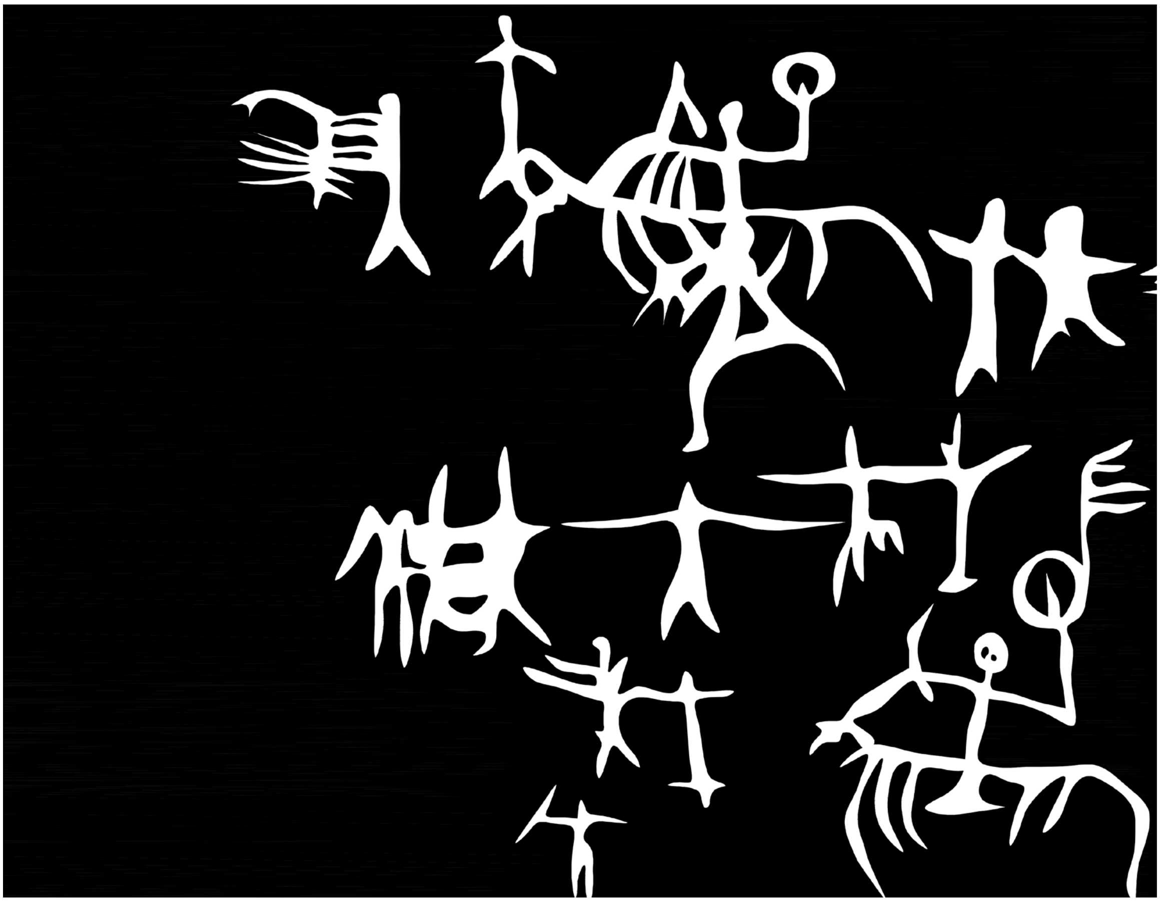


Fig. 4.28.8b Humans and animal riders

Here, a few human figures are shown. Their hands are raised upwards. It seems like a dance associated with celebration. Opposite to them, a triangle structure is seen, it could be a temple (Fig. 4.28.9a-4.28.9b).

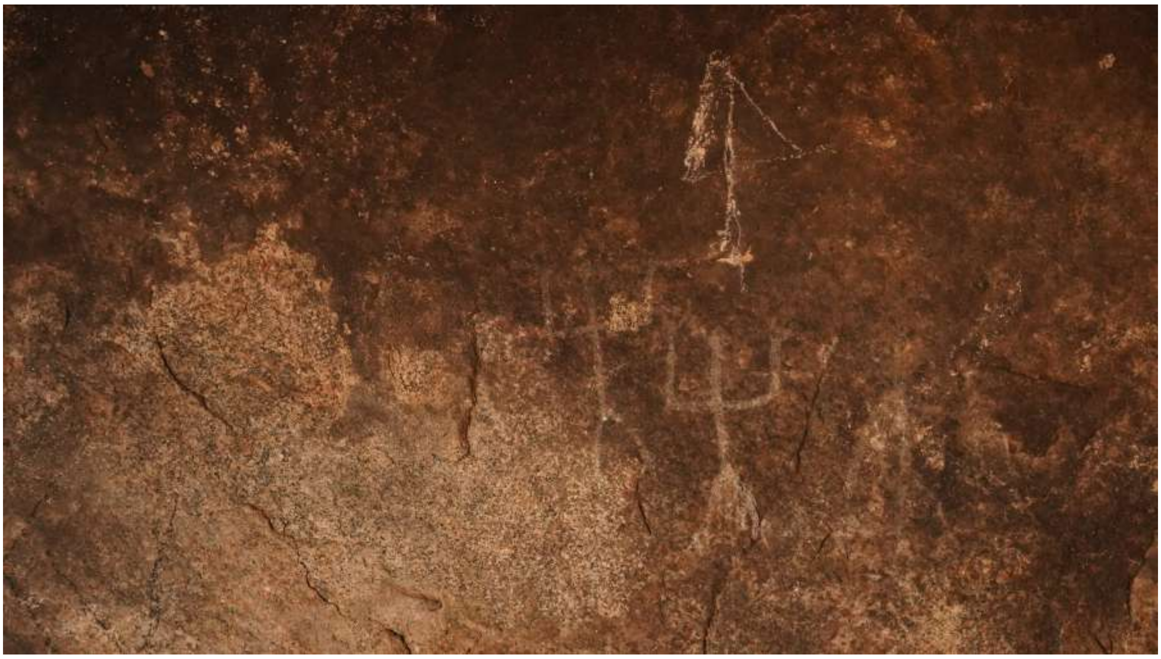


Fig. 4.28.9a Hunters with weapons

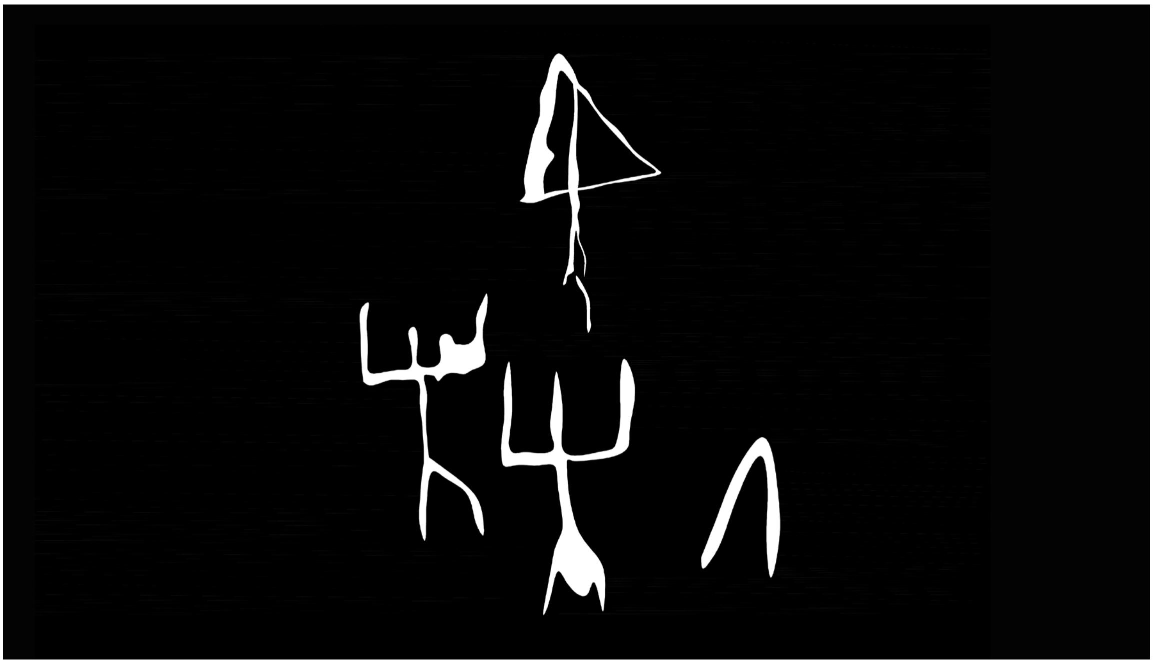


Fig. 4.28.9b Hunters with weapons

In these compositions, two styles of paintings are seen. One is small like a miniature style, the others are in normal style. In the small figures, two elephant-like figures, trees, huts and human figures are seen. In big size figures, two human figures are seen in a dancing pose. On the right top corner, pot-like symbols are also found. The entire scenes reveal a festival mood (Fig. 4.28.10a-4.28.10b).

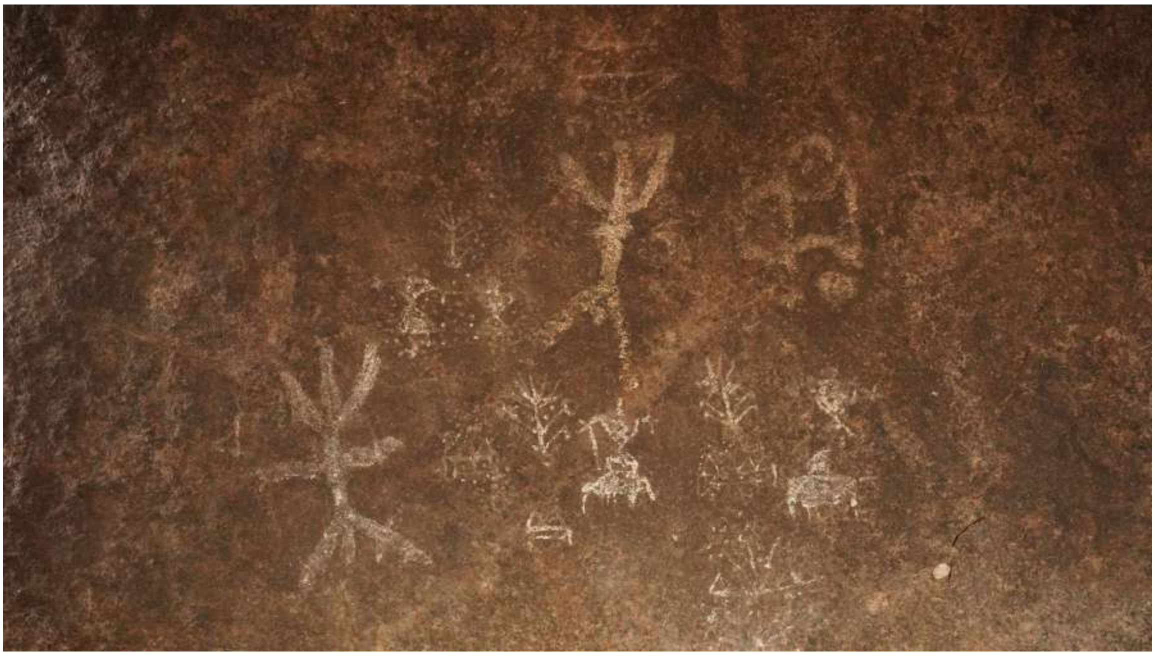


Fig. 4.28.10a Humans and animals

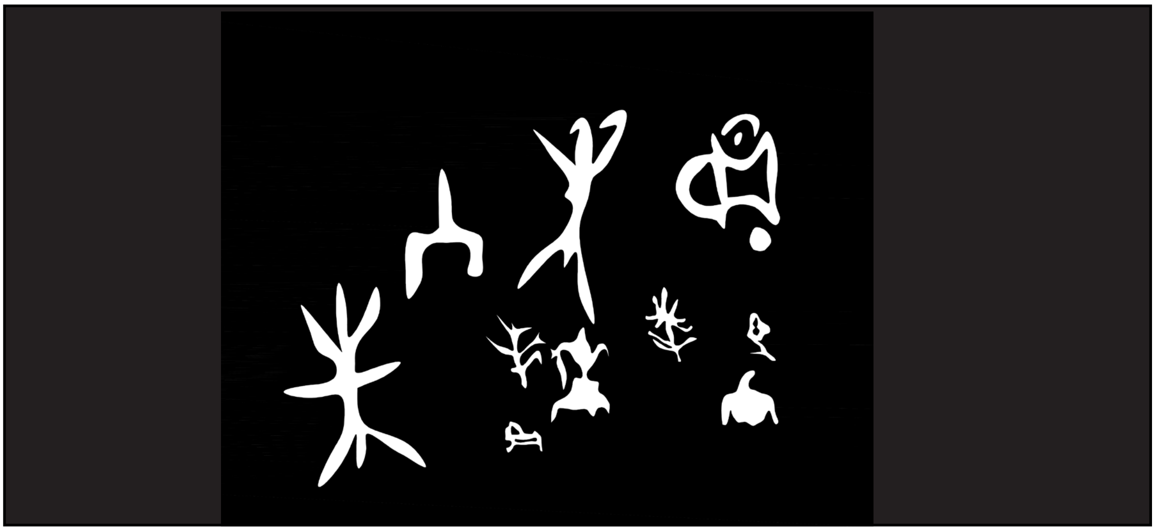


Fig. 4.28.10a *Humans and animals*

In this panel, a few human figures are shown in different movements, which could be a dance or a festival related event. Most of the images are in damaged conditions (Fig. 4.28.11a-4.28.11b).

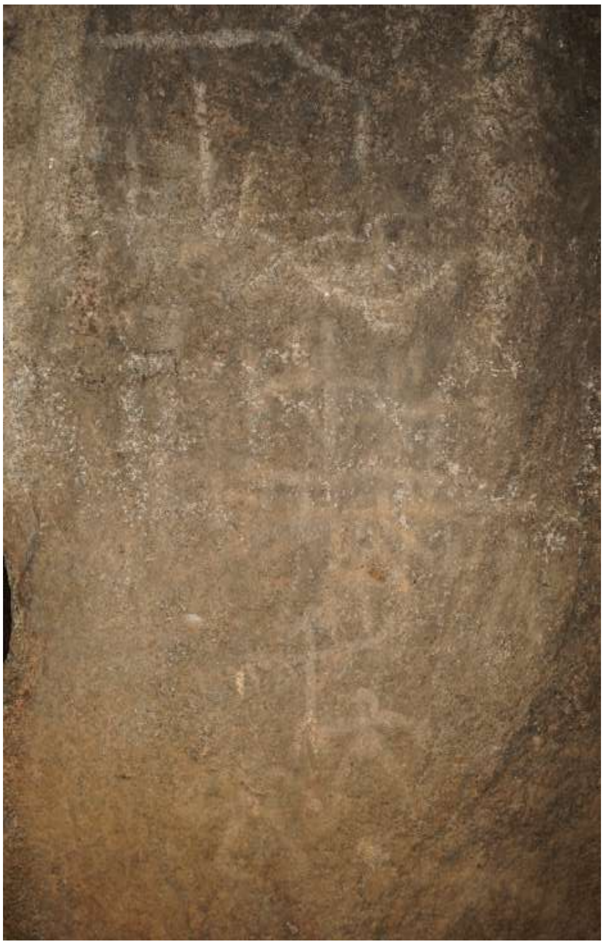


Fig. 4.28.11a Humans and a fish like sign

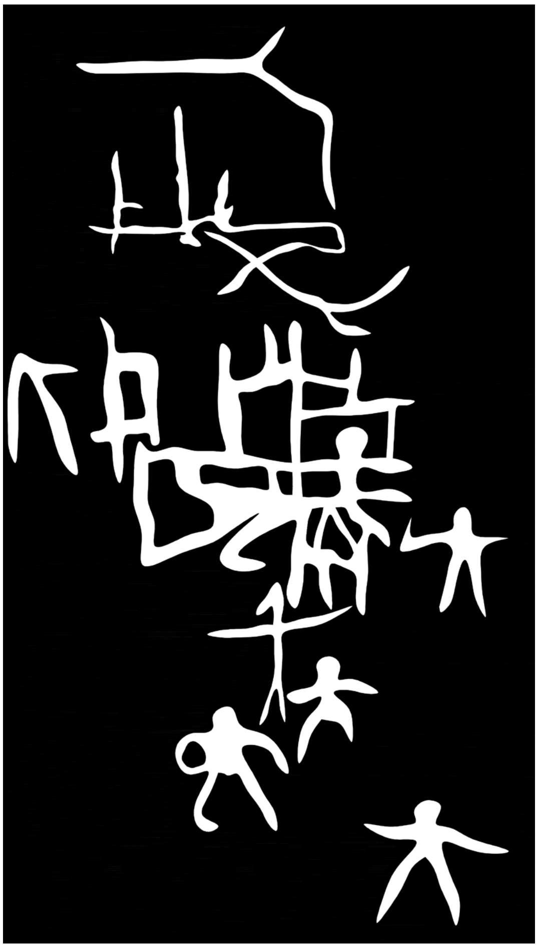


Fig. 4.28.11b Human and a fish like sign

In this panel, images are drawn in two rows. On the top left, a human figure is drawn in very thin strokes, opposite, a man is shown rising his both hands upwards. Below these, three human figures are seen. The extreme left is shown riding on horse-like animals, holding weapons in his hands, opposite to him, two human figures are standing on the ground seems fighting against the man on the horse. It seems a kind of battle scene is portrayed here (Fig. 4.28.12a-4.28.12b).

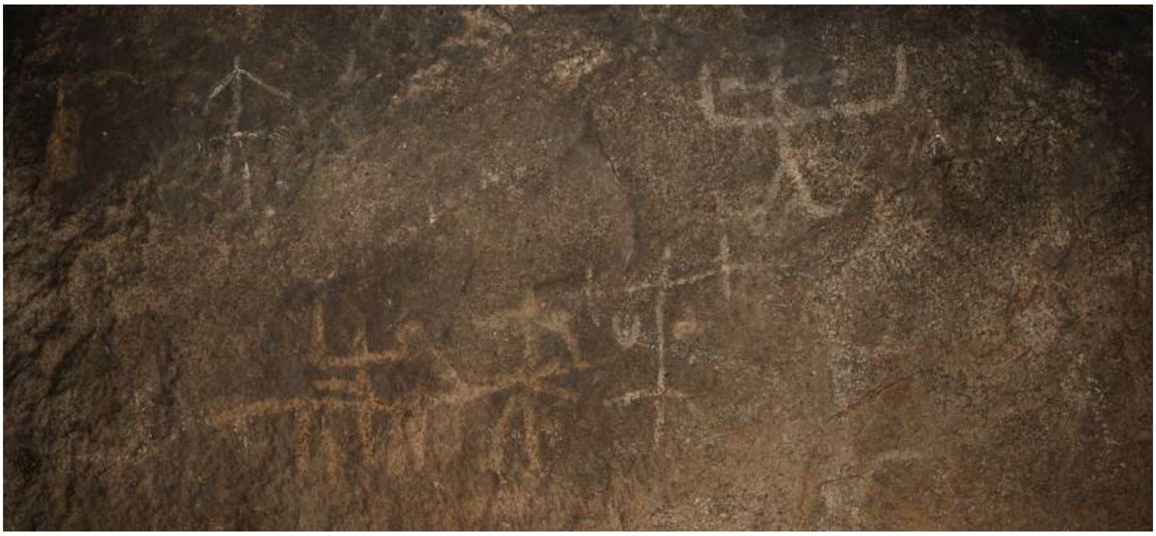


Fig. 4.28.12a Hunters

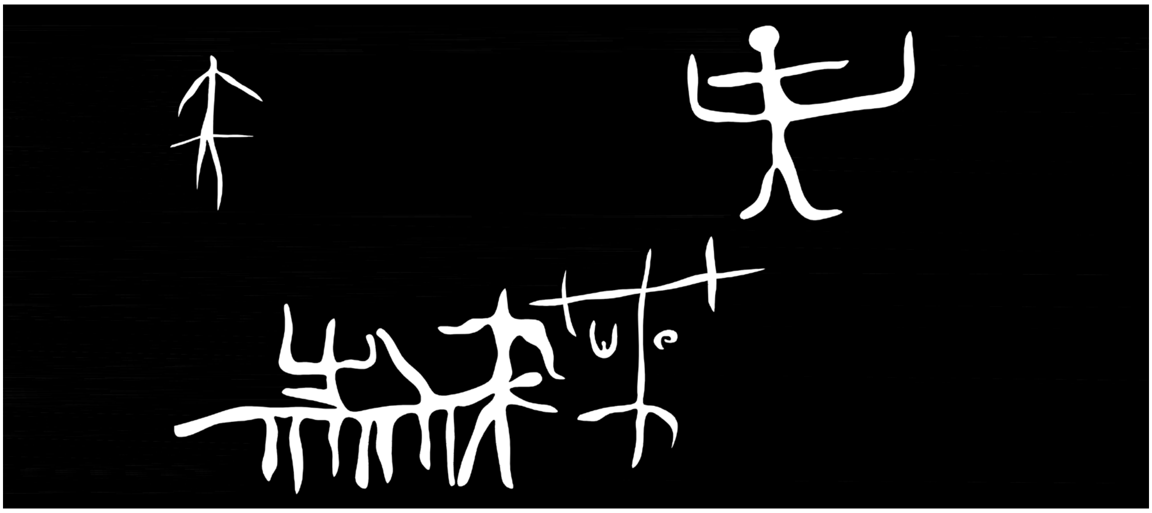
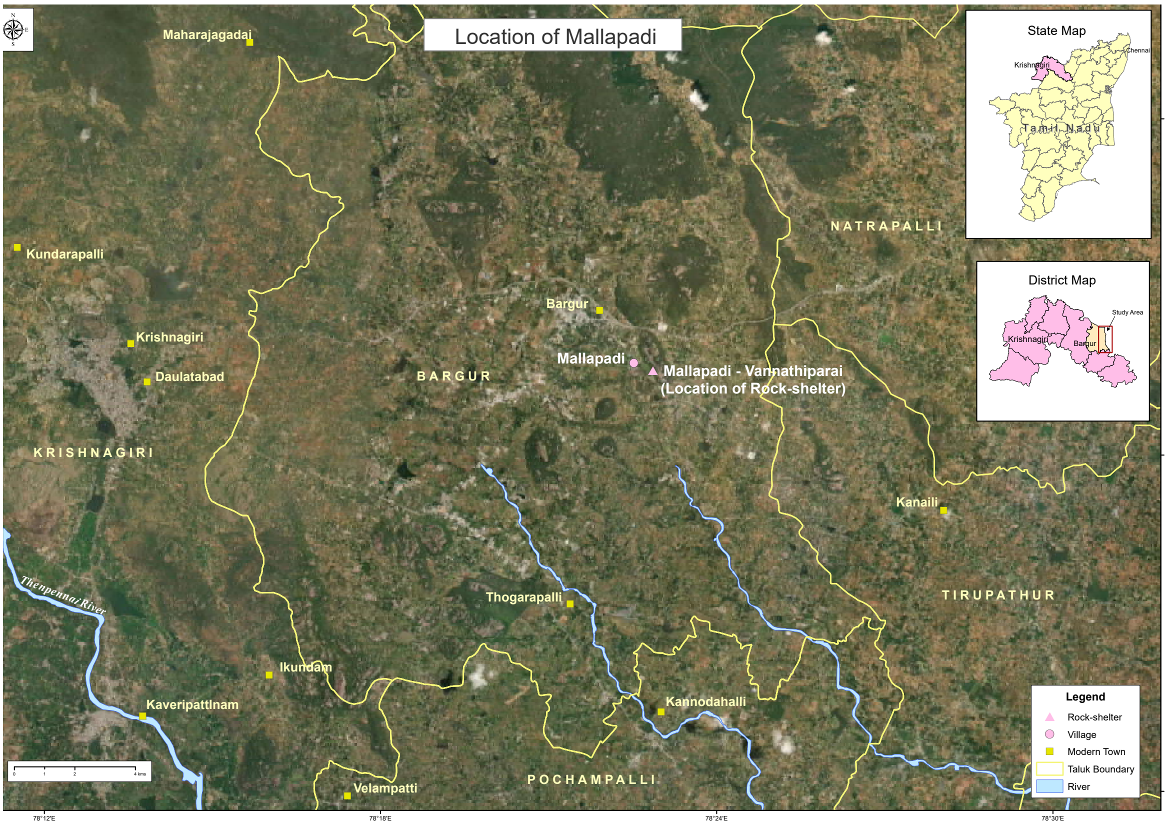


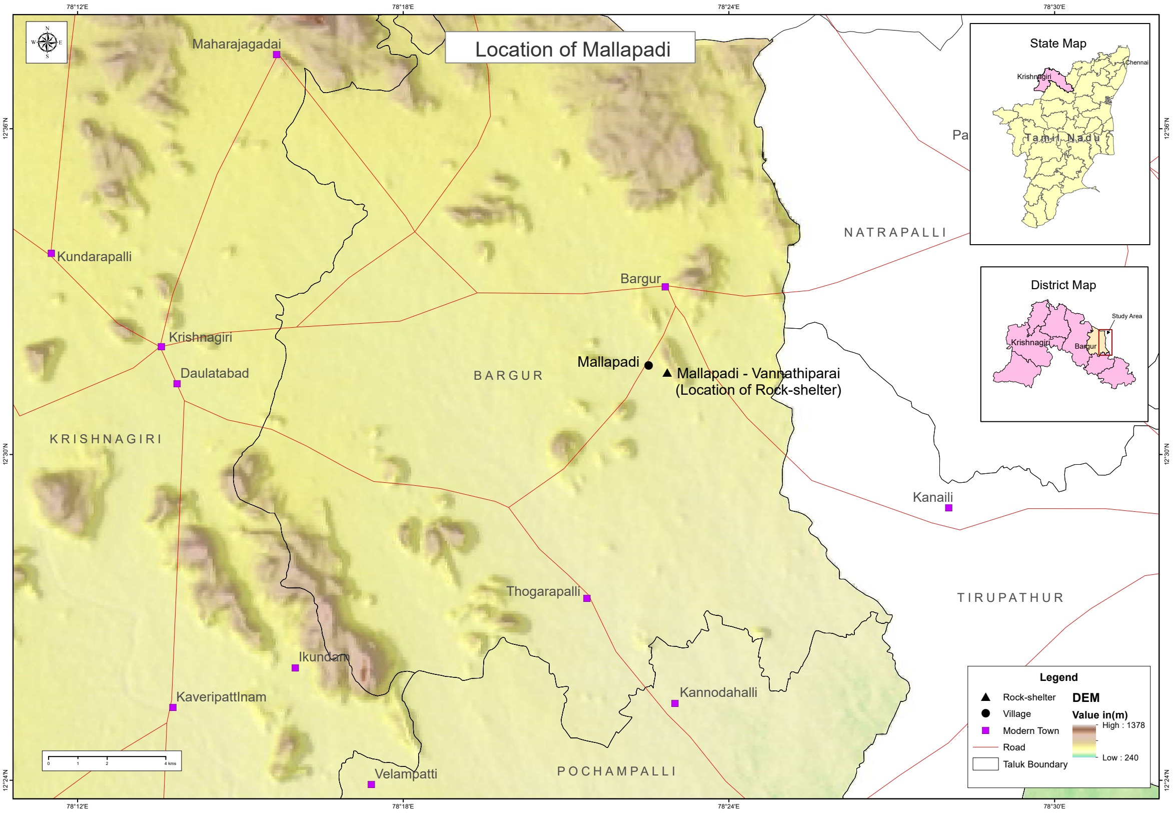
Fig. 4.28.12b Hunters

4.29. Mallapadi

The village Mallapadai (12. 52738 N; 78. 37532E) is located at a distance of 5 km to the east of Barugur and 15 km to the south-east of Krishnagiri on the Krishnagiri-Tirupattur main road (Map 4.29.1-4.29.2). There is a hill called Mallapadi malai with several rock shelters (Fig. 4.29.1). This was the first rock art site discovered in Tamil Nadu in the year 1980 by the researchers from the Department of Archeology, University of Madras under the direction of K.V. Raman. At the foothill, behind this village, there is a Perumal temple of Vijayanagara period. About 300 feet from the temple, paintings are found on the rocky outcrop locally called as *Vannathiparai / Vannan Kevi.*


Location of Mallapadi
Maharajagadai
Kundarapalli
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Bargur
Mallapadi
Mallapadi - Vannathiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
NATRAPALLI
Kanaili
TIRUPATHUR
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
Thenpennai River
Kannodahalli
Velampatti
POCHAMPALLI
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Krishnagiri
Bargur
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
78°30'E
12°36'N
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.29.1 Location of the rock-shelter


Location of Mallapadi
Maharajagadai
Kundarapalli
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Bargur
Mallapadi
Mallapadi - Vannathiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
NATRAPALLI
Kanaili
TIRUPATHUR
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
KaveripattInam
Kannodahalli
Velampatti
POCHAMPALLI
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Krishnagiri
Bargur
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
78°30'E
12°36'N
12°30'N
12°24'N

Map 4.29.1 Location of the rock-shelter

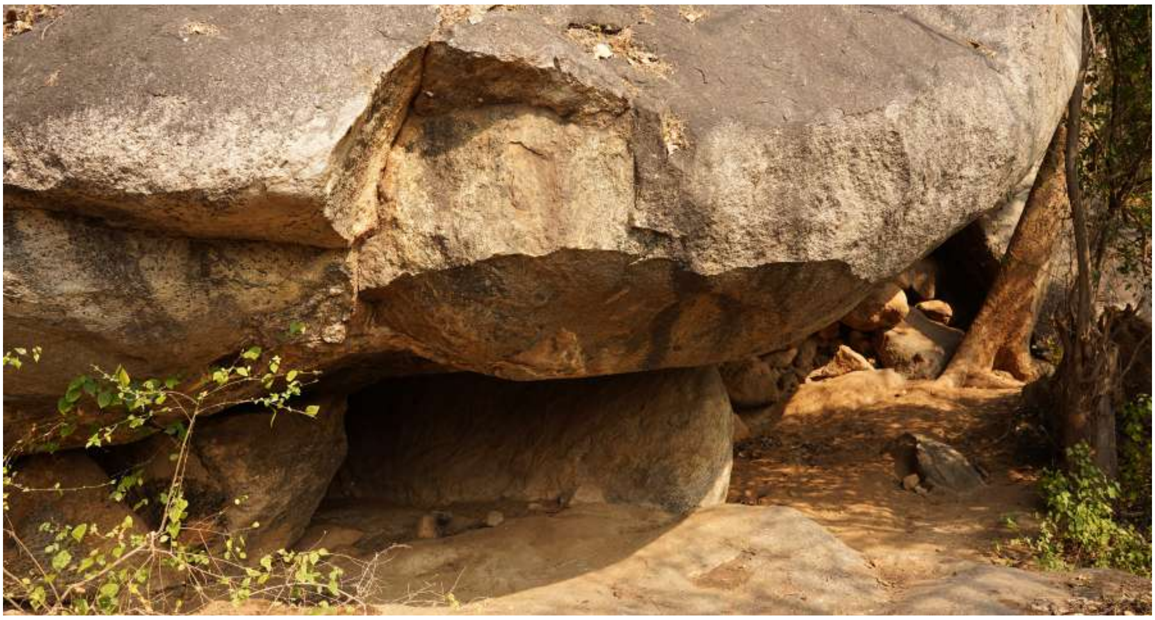


Fig. 4.29.1 General view of the rock-shelter

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 1.35 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 10.6 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 4 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 5 m. The total painted area is about 1.35mx78cm. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

The paintings are made in white. Two human figures are shown fighting each other with weapons, seated on an animal, possibly a horse. Another human being is shown holding a weapon in his right hand. Below this, an unknown animal is depicted in white pigment. The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of a fighting scene, hunters and animals.

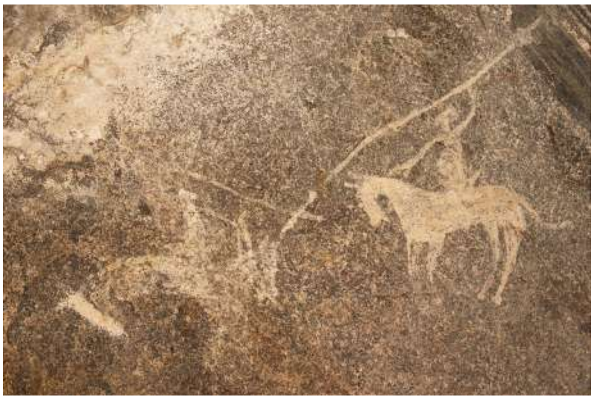


Fig. 4.29.2a Fighting scene

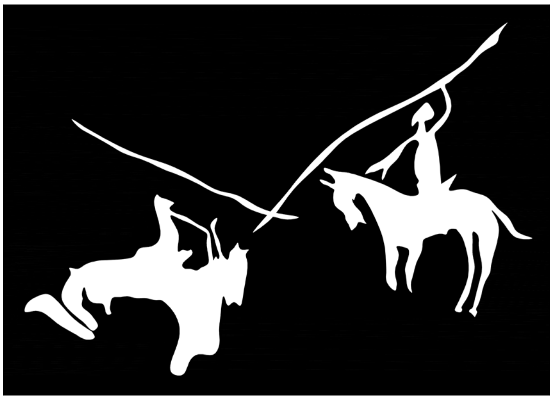


Fig. 4.29.2b Fighting scene

Panel Description

Two men seated on a horse fighting each other with long lance-like weapon, held in their right hand. The figures are painted in white with the interior filled-in. Horses are elegantly drawn. (Fig. 4.29.2a-4.29.2b).

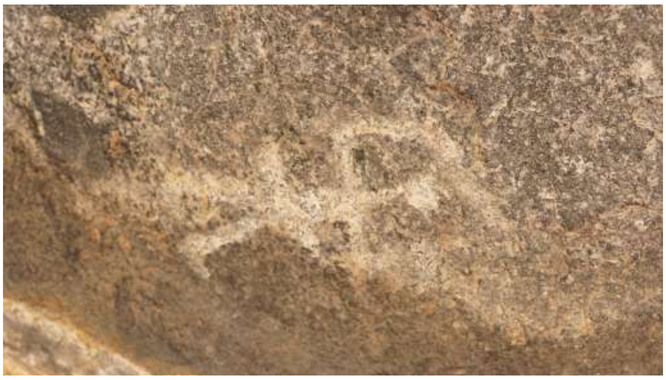


Fig. 4.29.3a Hunter

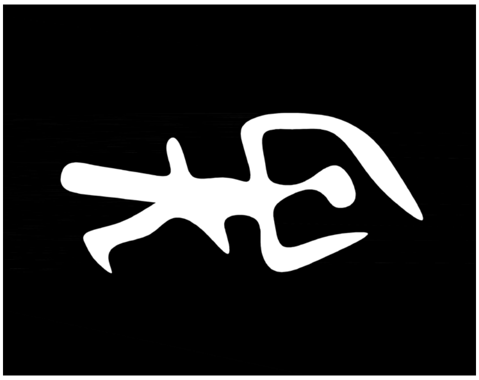


Fig. 4.29.3b Hunter

Above the previous image there is a warrior in white holding a sword in his right hand and a short sword at his waist. (Fig. 4.29.3a-4.29.3b).

Below the horse painting (Fig. 4.29.2), the image of a cow in white is drawn. (Fig. 4.29.4a-4.29.4b).

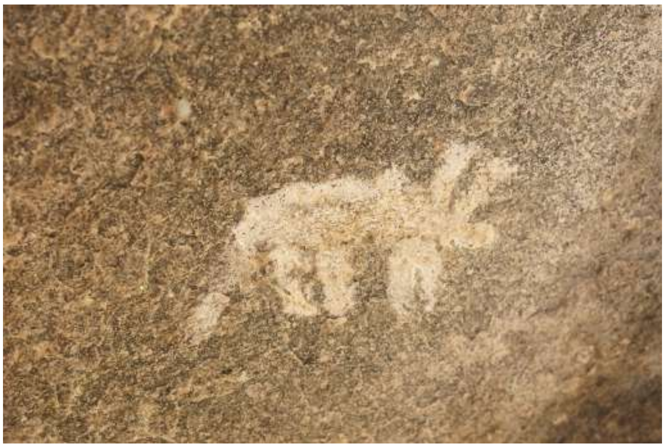


Fig. 4.29.4a An animal

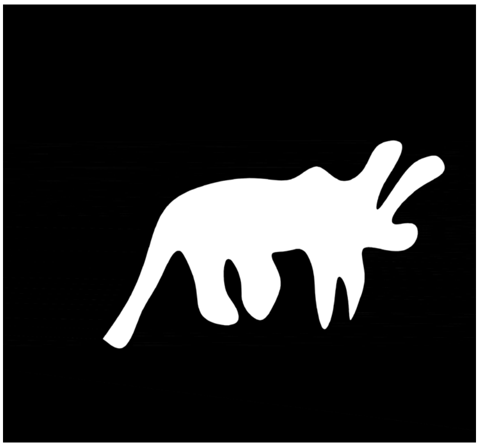


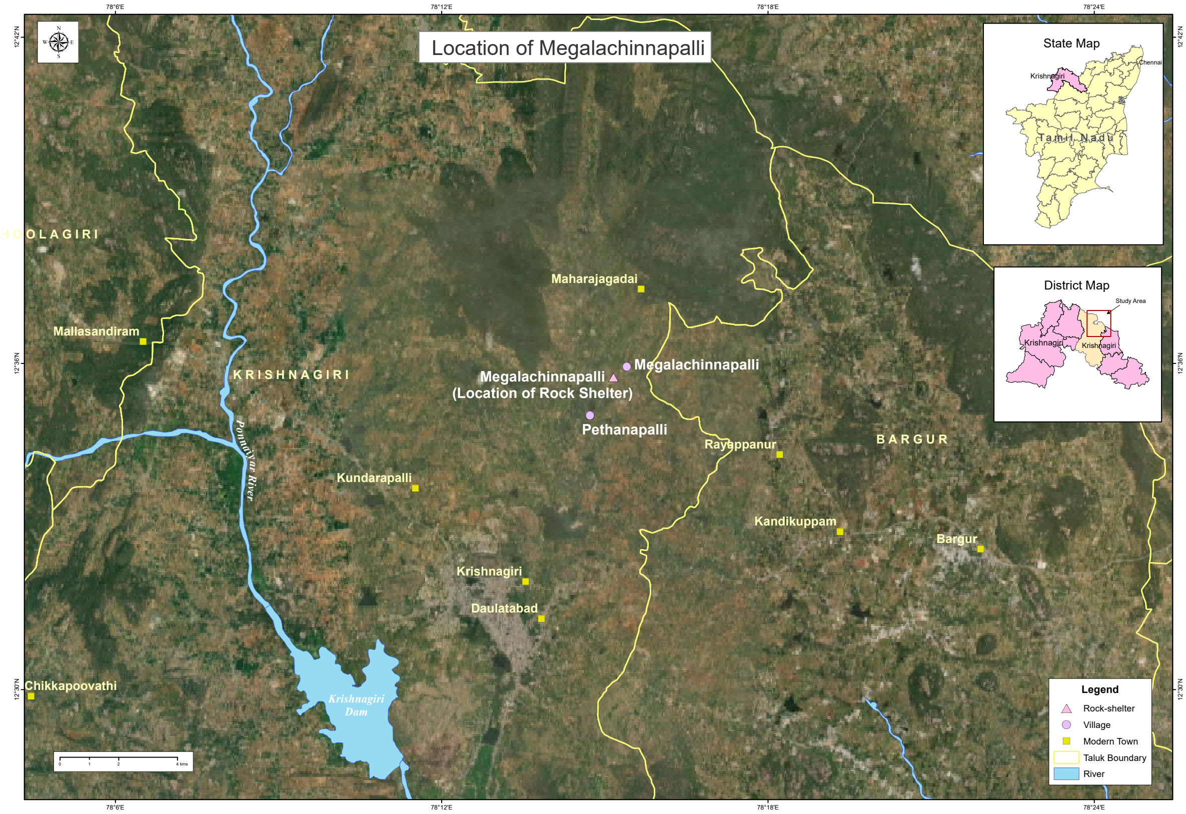
Fig. 4.29.4b An animal

4.30. Megalachinnapalli

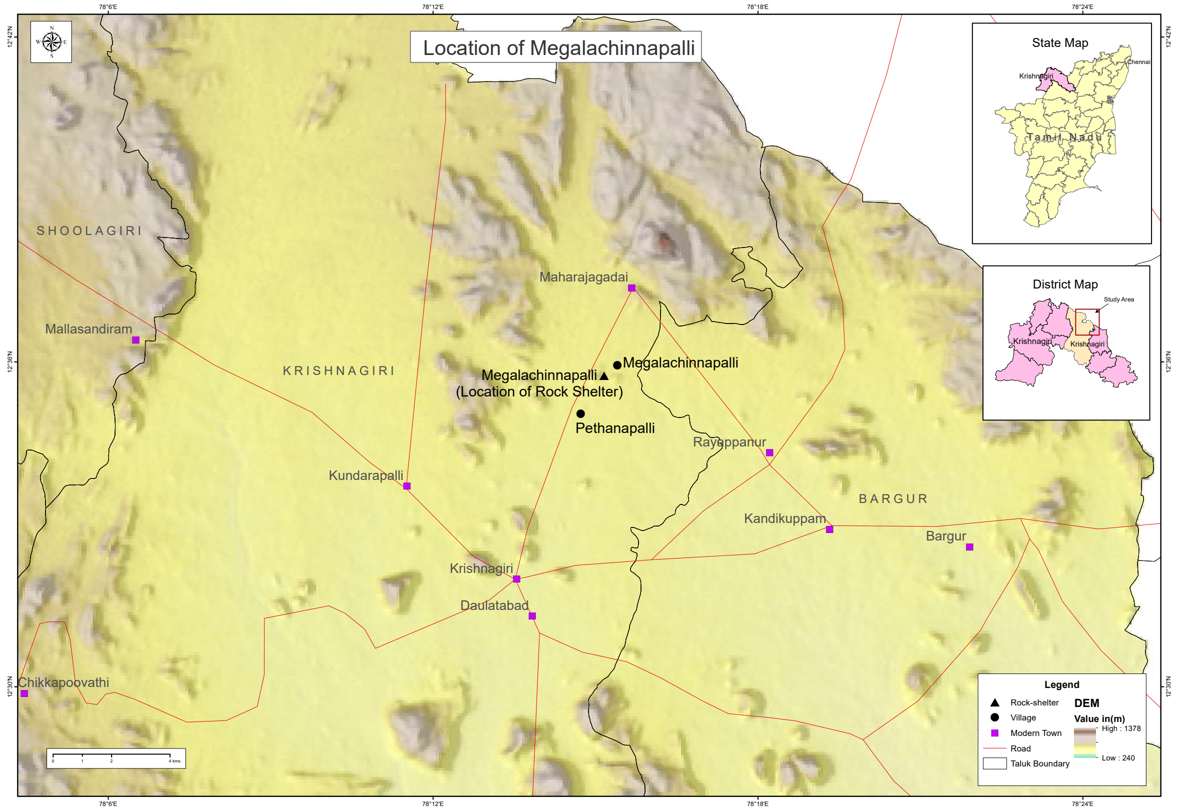
The village Megalachinnapalli (also called as Meganachinnapalli) (12.59884 N; 78.25670 E) is located about 16 km to the north of Krishnagiri on the Krishangiri-Kuppam road. A large hill called Sulamalai is found on the southern side of the village (Map 4.30.1-4.30.2). This hillock is covered with thick thorny bushes. A large number of rock shelters and caverns are found on the slopes of this hill. One of the rock shelters contains paintings and it is located on the roadside towards this village (Fig. 4.30.1). The paintings here are executed in white pigment. This shelter preserves paintings of three human figures shown standing and three equal lines crossed each other like a star and geometric designs such as circle, square, straight line, etc.

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 3 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 3 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 2.60 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 1.50 m. The total painted area is about 3x2.50 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Megalachinnapalli
State Map
District Map
Study Area
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Krishnagiri
HOSOLAGIRI
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Maharajagadai
Mallasandiram
Megalachinnapalli
Megalachinnapalli
(Location of Rock Shelter)
Pethanapalli
Rayappanur
Kundarapalli
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Chikkapoovathi
Krishnagiri Dam
Ponnaiyar River
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°42'N
12°36'N
12°30'N

▸ *Map 4.30.1 Location of the rock shelter*


Location of Megalachinnapalli
State Map
District Map
Study Area
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Krishnagiri
SHOOLAGIRI
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Maharajagadai
Mallasandiram
Megalachinnapalli
Megalachinnapalli
(Location of Rock Shelter)
Pethanapalli
Rayappanur
Kundarapalli
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Chikkapoovathi
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°42'N
12°36'N
12°30'N

▸ *Map 4.30.2 Location of the rock shelter*

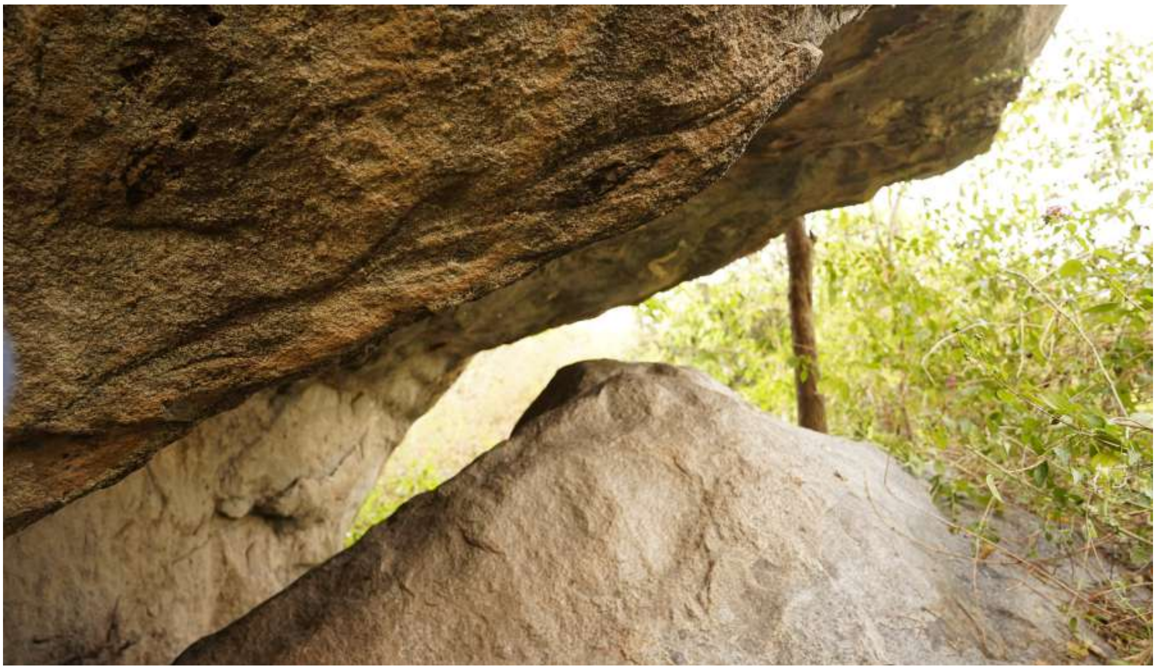


Fig. 4.30.1 Location of the rock shelter

Description

As aforesaid, this shelter contains paintings in white pigment. Many of the paintings are linear drawings of human figures riding on animals, geometric symbols and decorative symbols.

Panel Description

In this panel, two figures are drawn using white pigment. This scene depicts a female and male figure standing opposite each other, standing over something which looks like a Catamaran. This painting clearly differentiates male and female figures by their physical features and garments. In the female figure, the right hand is drawn towards-back and left-hand stretches front towards the man. In the male figure, the right hand is slightly bent upwards and his left hand is slightly bent backwards. This scene had a depiction like both figures are dancing or talking to each other (Fig. 4.30.2a-4.30.2b).

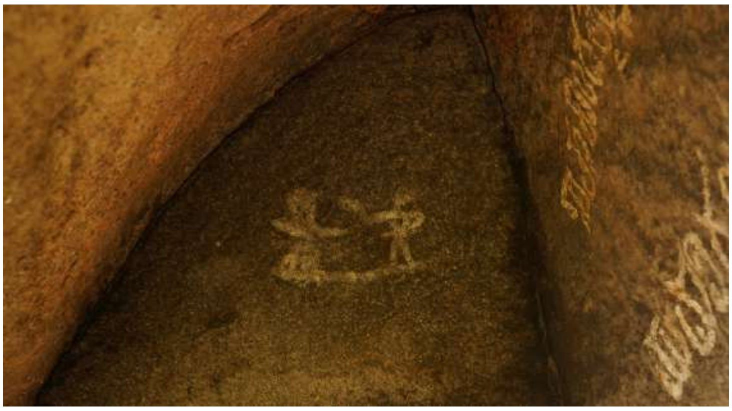


Fig. 4.30.2a Humans

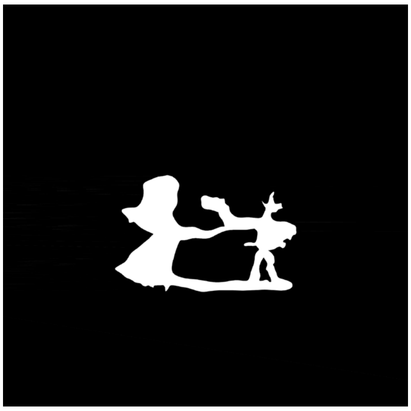


Fig. 4.30.2b Humans

In this panel, human figures and abstract symbols are drawn and they are of geometric shape drawn with white pigment. Three human figures are drawn like sitting over an animal. Both hands of that human are stretched up. On another side, three human figures are drawn in order and in the centre a human figure is drawn like standing and his hands and legs are overstretched. The abstract symbols which are drawn all over the panel includ a triangle symbol with two cross lines inside, a diamond with horizontal and vertical lines intersecting each other in the centre. A plus symbol and a leftward curve which curved on either side. Some paintings are faded considerably (Fig. 4.30.3a-4.30.3b).

In this panel, paintings are drawn in white, all are faded. Two long vertical lines are only clearly visible. Other than this, a symbol like an inverted 'V' is found (Fig. 4.30.4a-4.30.4b).

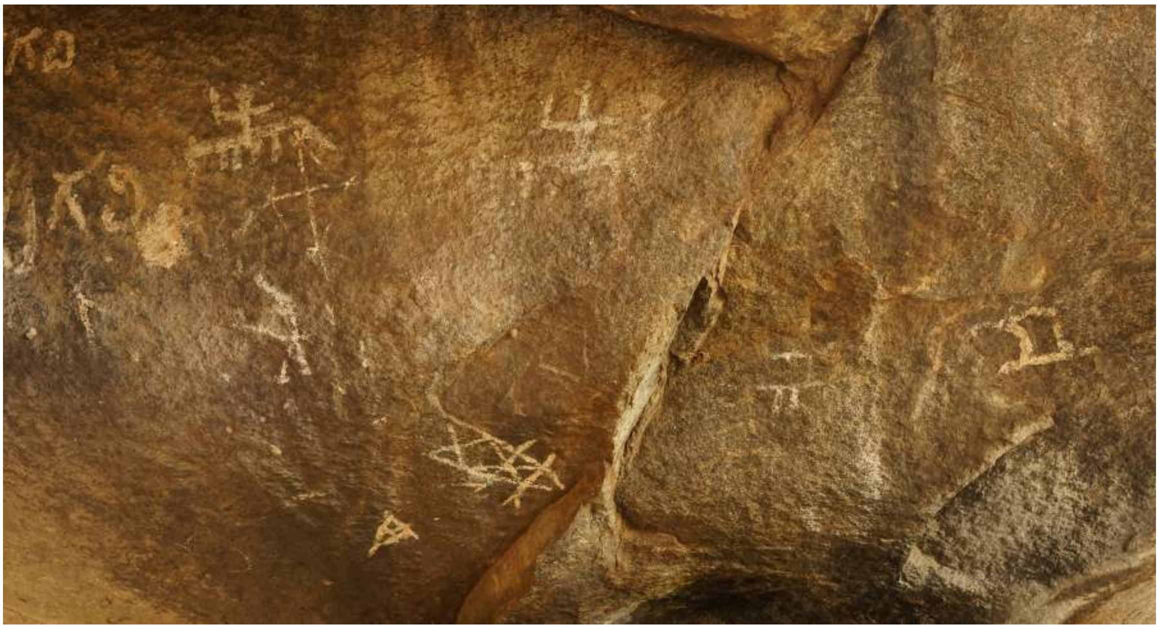


Fig. 4.30.3a Animal, Riders human and animal

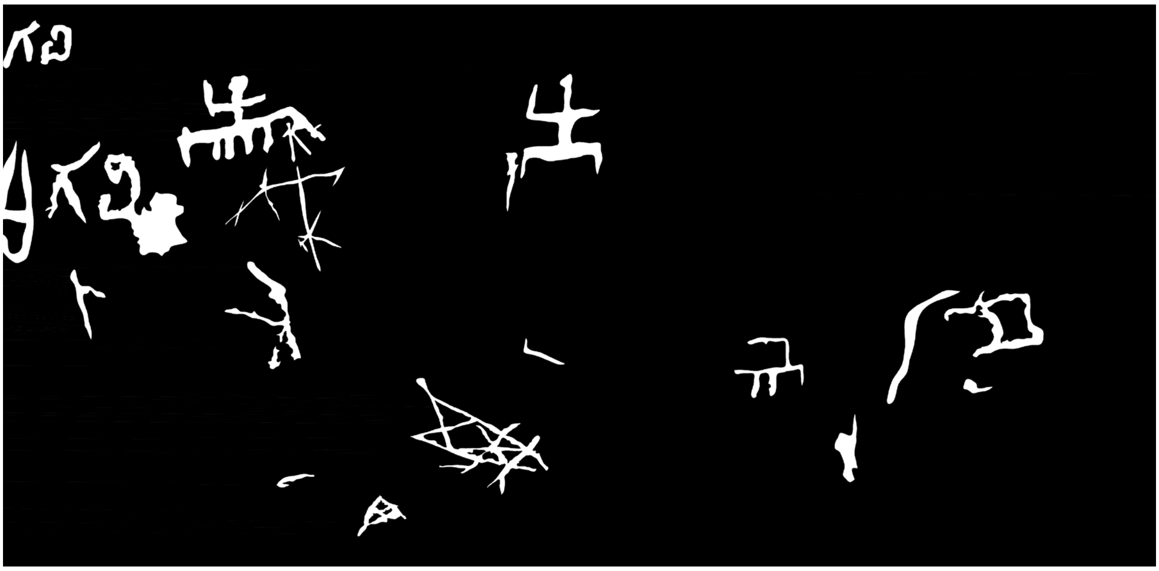


Fig. 4.30.3b Animal Riders, human and animal

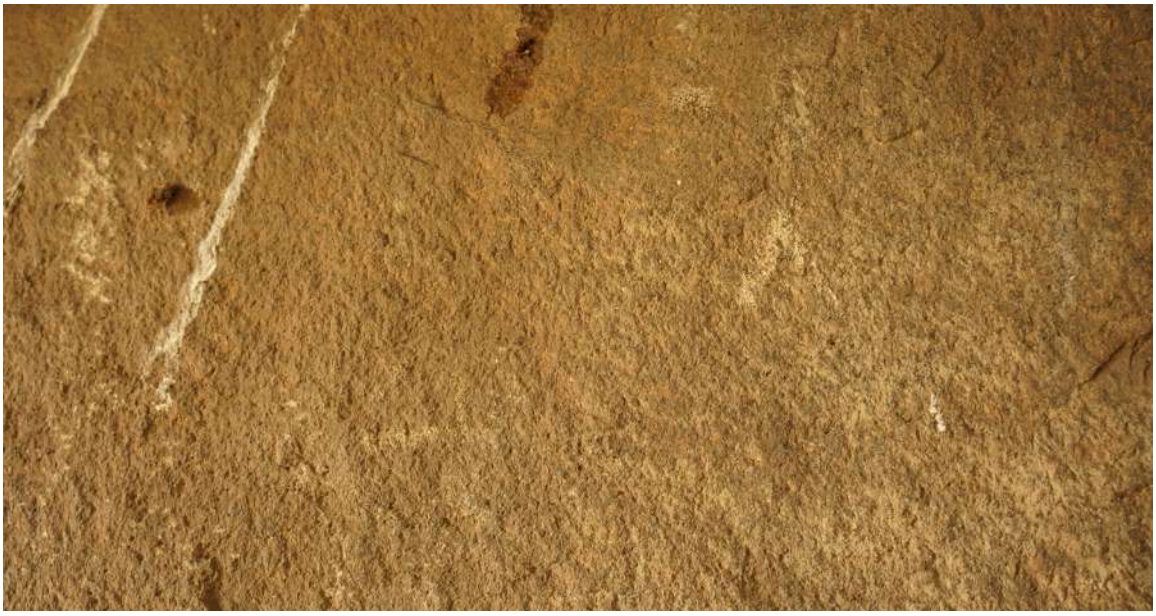


Fig. 4.30.4a Two slanting lines

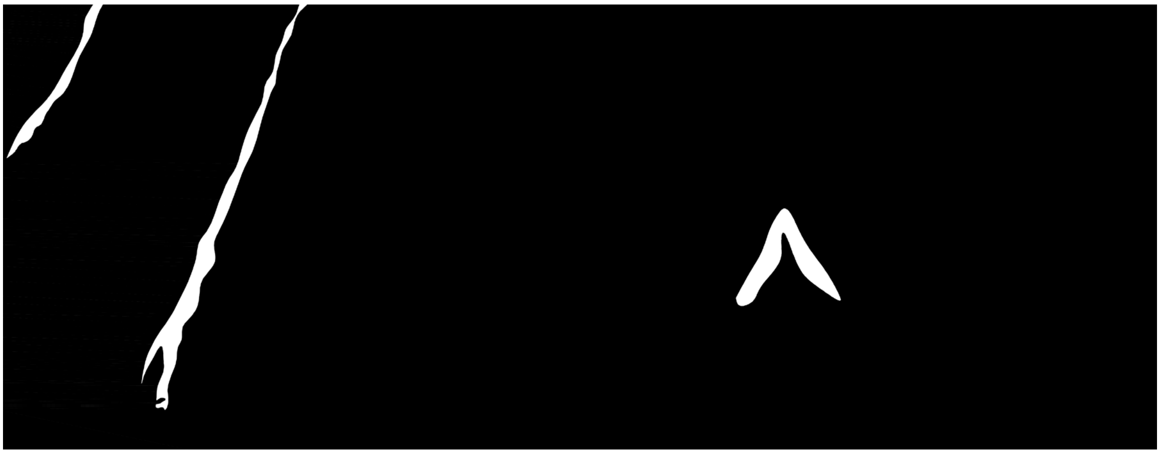


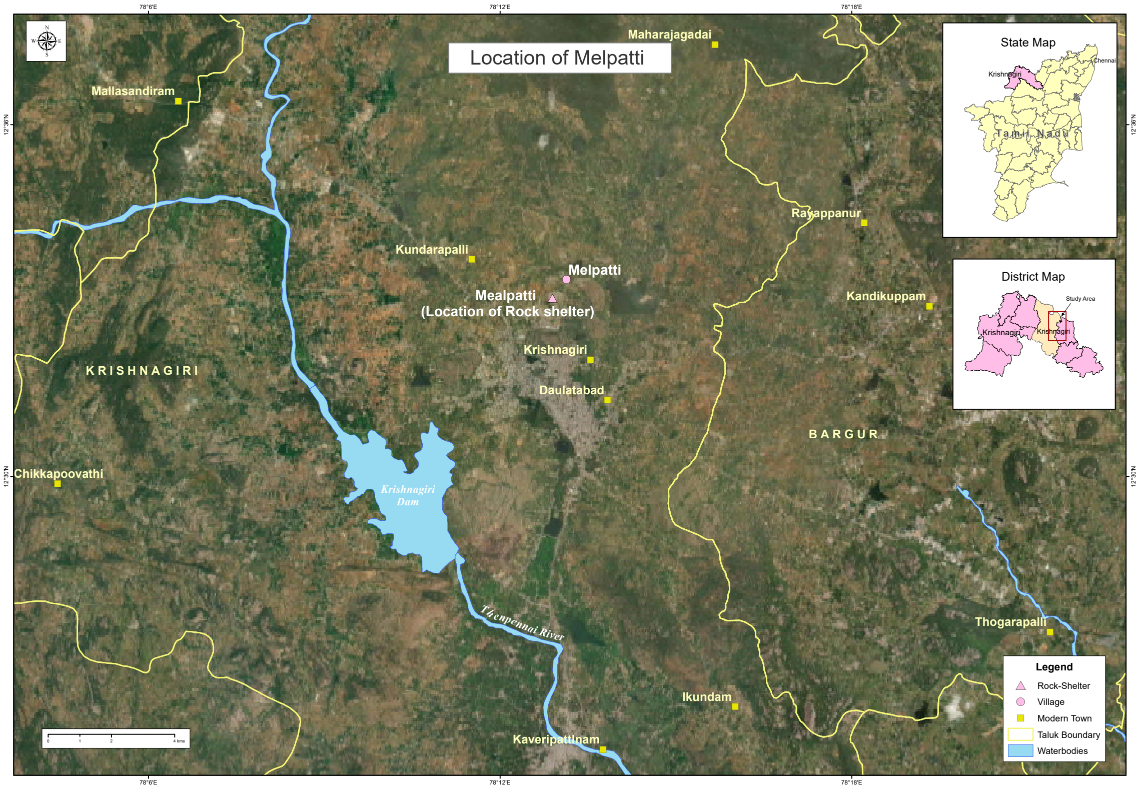
Fig. 4.30.4b Two slanting lines

4.31. Melpatti

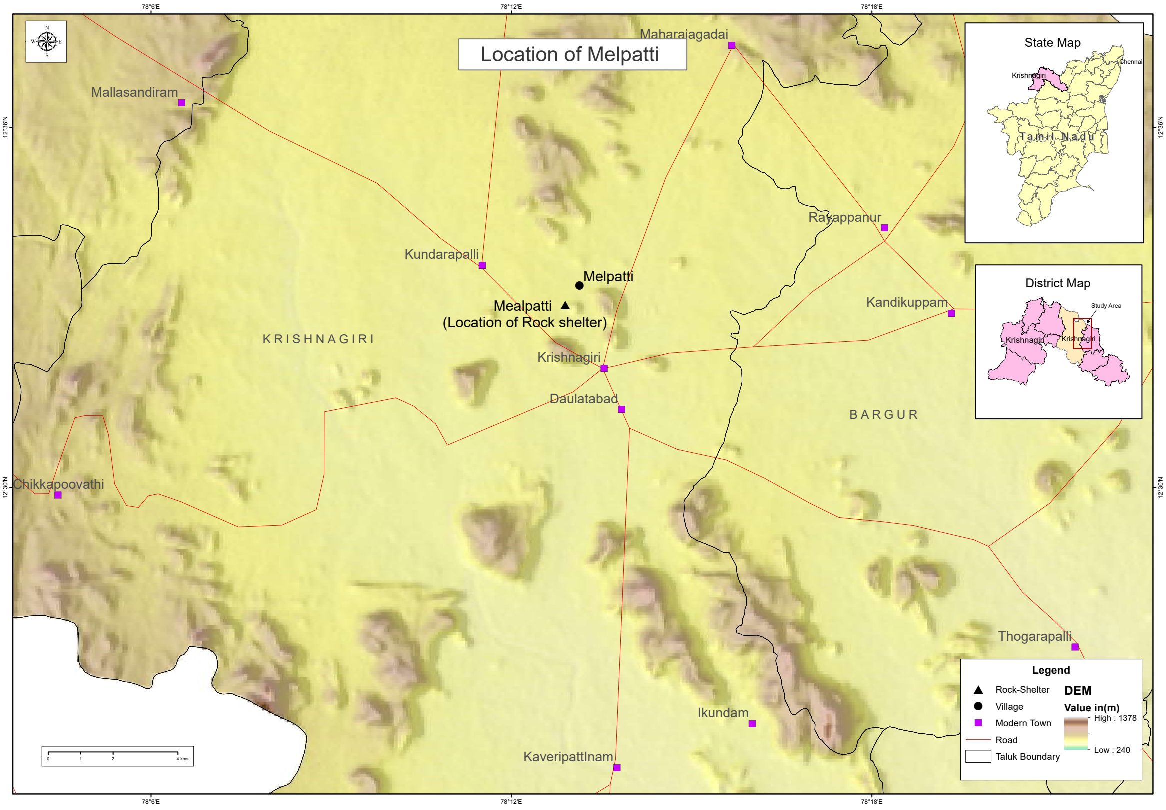
The village Melpatti (12.55602 N; 78.21885 E) is located at a distance of 5 km to the north of Krishnagiri on Krishnagiri - Maharajakadai road (Maps 4.31.1-4.31.2). The exact location of the rock shelter can be found at 1 km to the north of Melpatti village on top of Boomamalai or bivigundu hill (Fig. 4.31.1). A huge boulder at the top of the hill is locally known as bivigundu. This bivigundu contains a temple on its western side. The boulder is noticed with significant rock art at the right corner. This rock art found here is painted in white.

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 1.20 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 3.50 m and the total height of the inclined surface of the rock is 2.20 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 3 m. The total painted area is about 120x80 cm. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Melpatti
Maharajagadai
Mallasandiram
Rayappanur
Kundarapalli
Melpatti
Mealpatti
(Location of Rock shelter)
Kandikuppam
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Chikkapoovathi
Krishnagiri Dam
Thenpennai River
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
12°36'N
12°30'N

Map 4.31.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Melpatti
Maharajagadai
Mallasandiram
Rayappanur
Kundarapalli
Melpatti
Mealpatti
(Location of Rock shelter)
Kandikuppam
KRISHNAGIRI
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Chikkapoovathi
Thogarapalli
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-Shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
12°36'N
12°30'N

Map 4.31.2 Location of the rock shelter

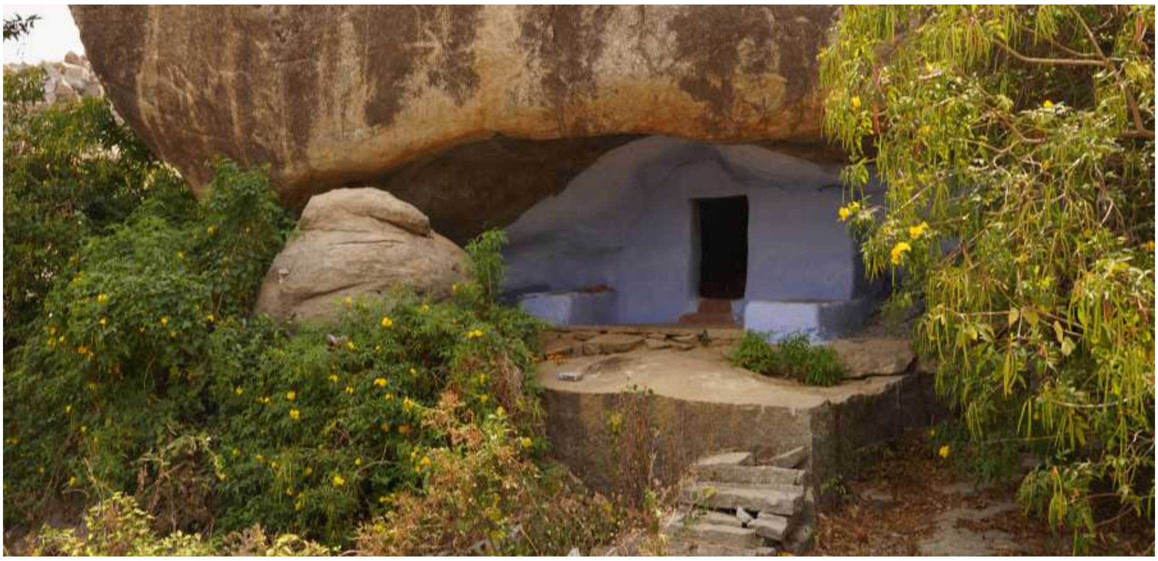


Fig. 4.31.1 *General view of the rock shelter*

Description

There are a few paintings on the front side of one of the rock shelters. These paintings are in white colour. New constructions were erected on the rock shelter by later occupation. Therefore, many paintings may have disappeared. In the past, this shelter must have been a habitable place.

The paintings represent a warrior riding on a horse, a human figure in line drawing, a horse figure, a sun-moon shaped symbol, three triangles with some points and some shapes. The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of flora design, palm sign, animal rider, geometrical pattern, palm sign, fish like sign and shield like sign could be seen.

Panel Description

In the panel, a hunter is shown standing on an animal and holding a sword on in his right hand. A star-like sign with a floral motif painted on the back side of the animal. A human hand is painted in front of the animal. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.31.2a-4.31.2b).

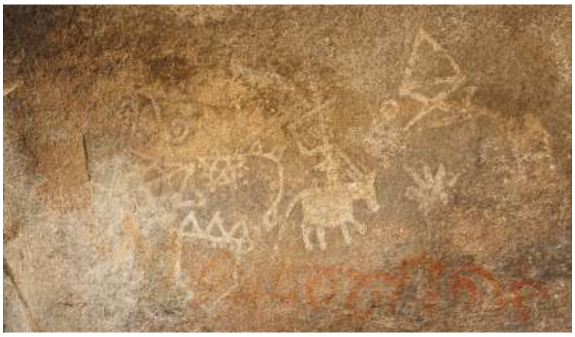


Fig. 4.31.2a Flora design, palm sign, animal rider and fish like sign

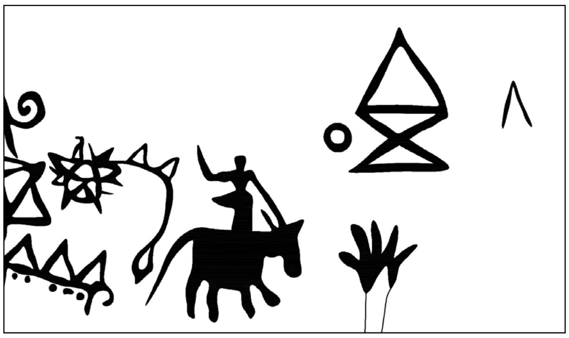


Fig. 4.31.2b Flora design, palm sign, animal rider and fish like sign

This figure shows a geometrical pattern of an unidentified image. The naturalistic outline is decorated with a geometrical pattern. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.31.3a-4.31.3b).

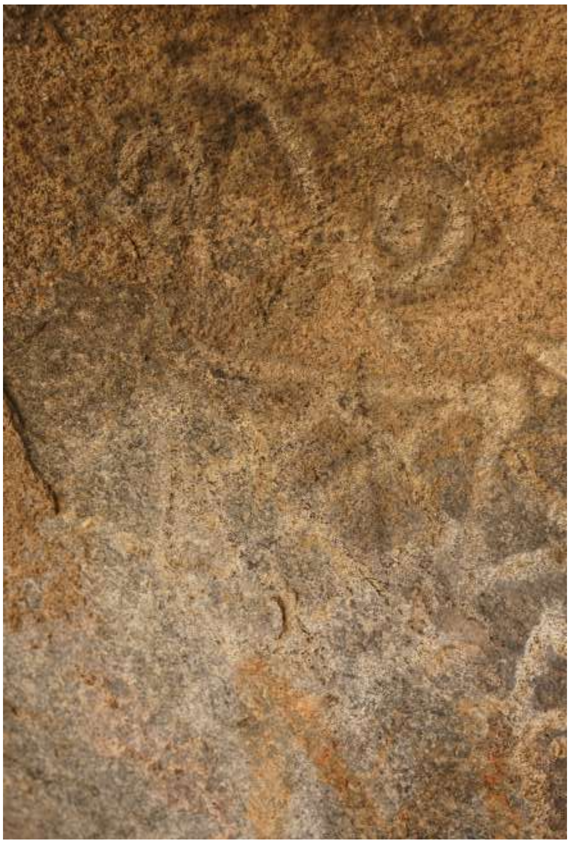


Fig. 4.31.3a *Geometrical pattern*

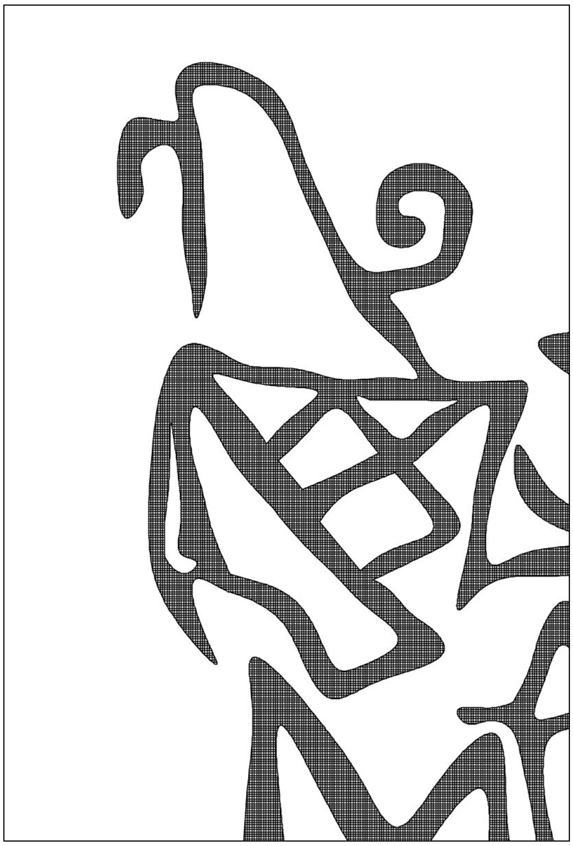


Fig. 4.31.3b *Geometrical pattern*

The figure shows the floral image with a unidentified geometrical sign. A star-like sign with a floral motif is painted on the back side of the animal. An animal is painted on the left side of the flora. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.31.4a-4.31.4b).

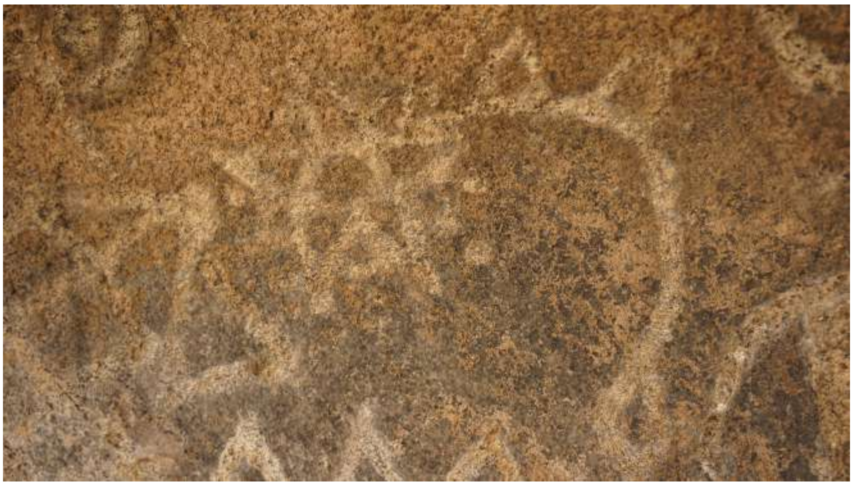


Fig. 4.31.4a *Flora design*

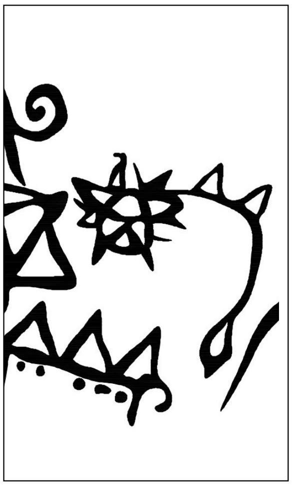


Fig. 4.31.4b *Flora design*

The figure is shown with a shield-like sign. A shield is decorated with a geometrical pattern on the top. A triangle sign is painted on the top of the shield-like sign. The colour of the painting is white (Figs. 4.31.5a-4.31.5b).

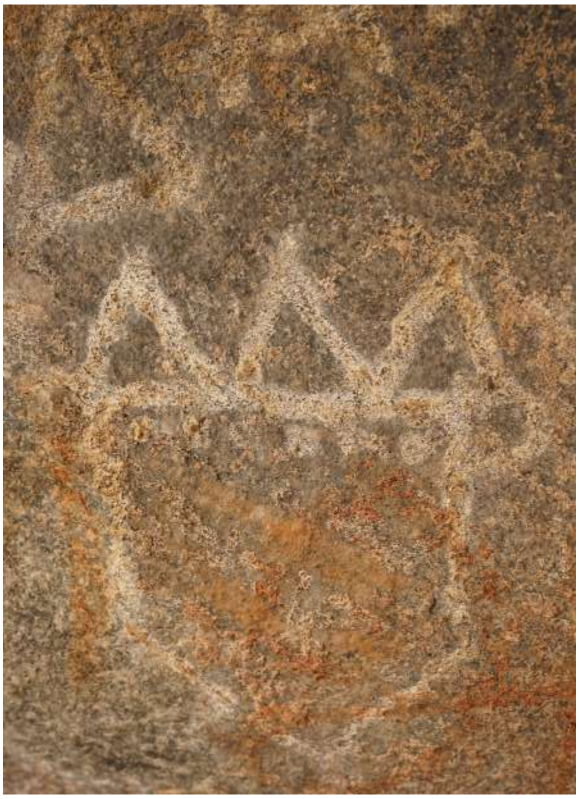


Fig. 4.31.5a *Shield?*

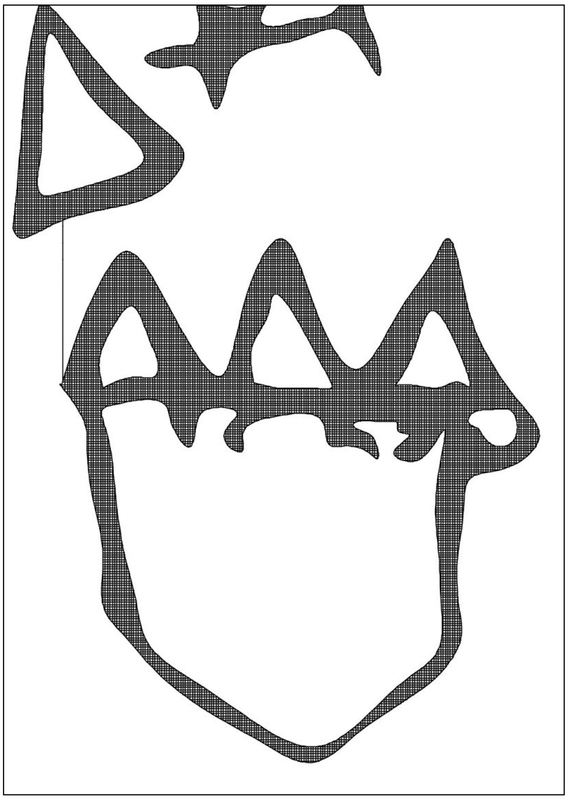


Fig. 4.31.5b Shield?

The figure comprises a human hand with five fingers. All of them are comparatively the same. The colour of the painting is white (Figs. 4.31.6a-4.31.6b).

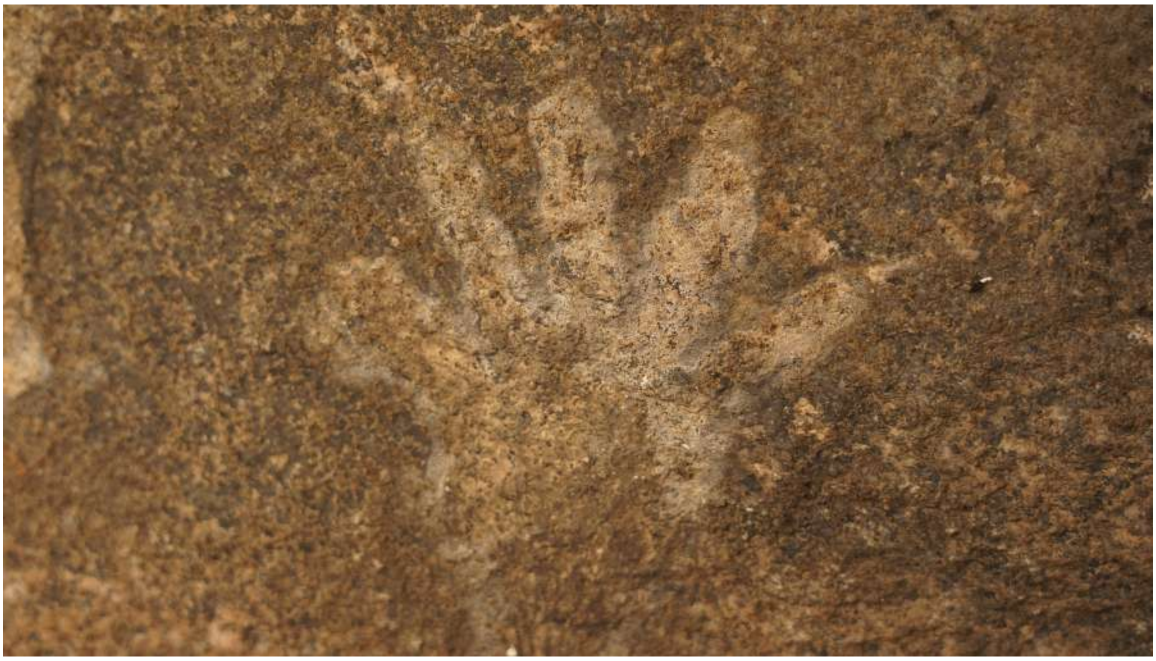


Fig. 4.31.6a Palm sign

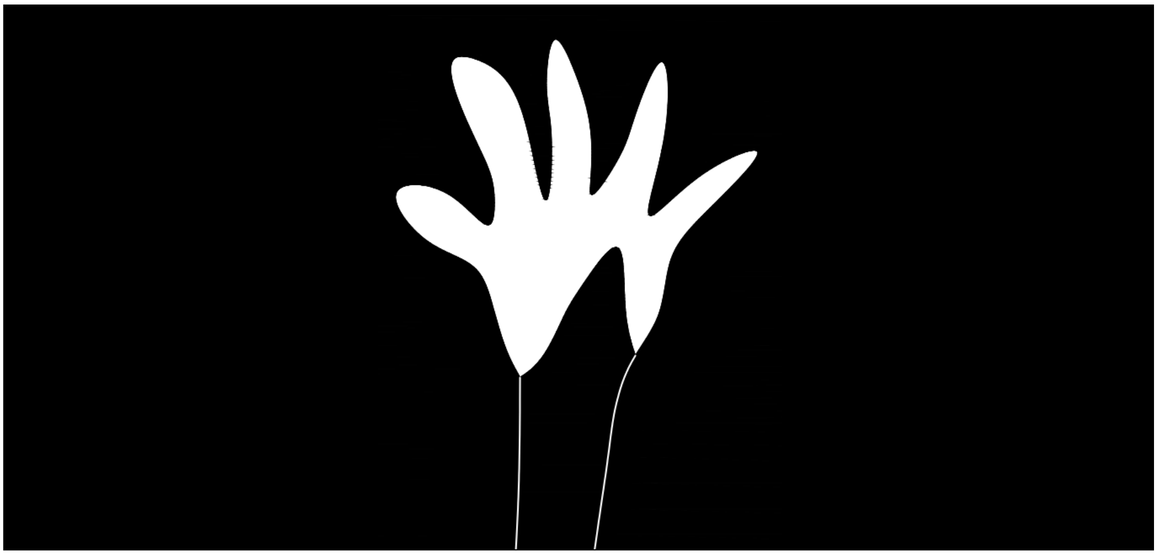


Fig. 4.31.6b Palm sign

The figure depicts a fish like sign. The diamond-shaped images are decorated with a geometrical form, which is having a triangle at the top. A small circle is painted on either side of the diamond. The colour of the painting is white (Figs. 4.31.7a-4.31.7b).

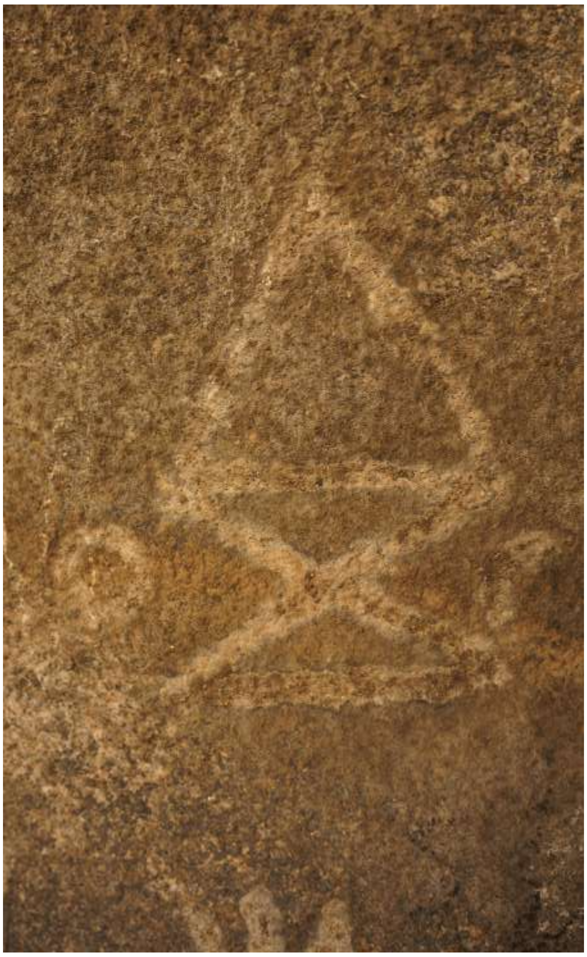


Fig. 4.31.7a Fish like sign

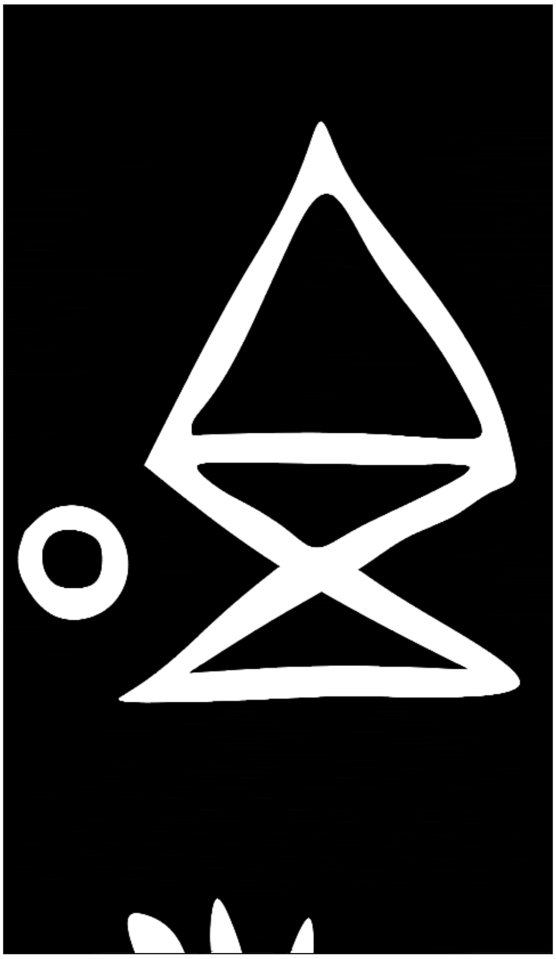


Fig. 4.31.7b Fish like sign

A human is depicted as standing on the animal and holding a sword in his right hand. The tail of the bull is longer than its leg. The hunter wears a headdress. His left hand is touching the animal's head. The colour of the painting is white (Figs. 4.31.8a-4.31.8b).

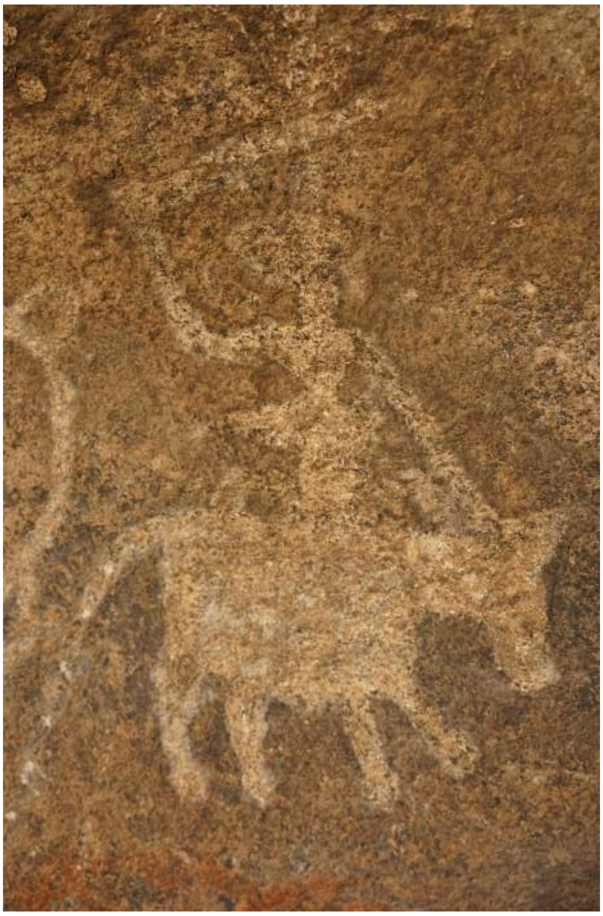


Fig. 4.31.8a Animal rider

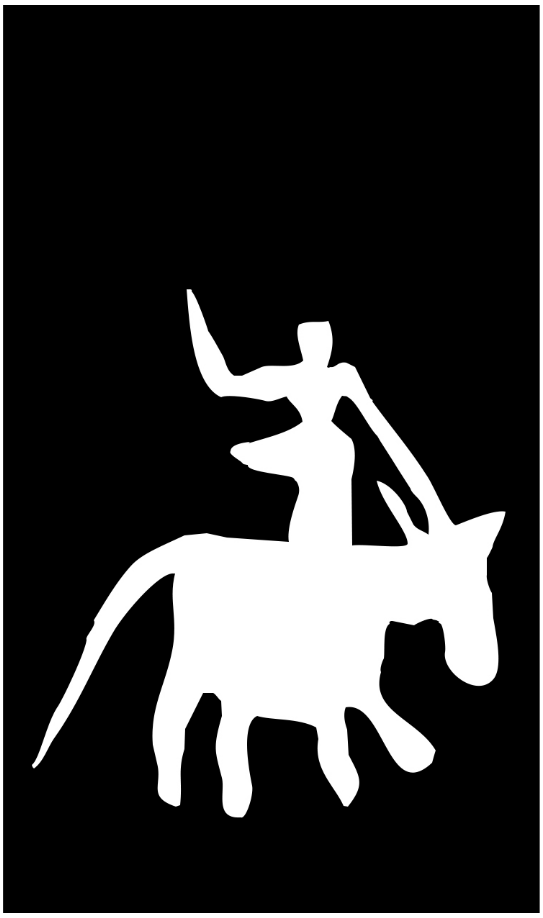


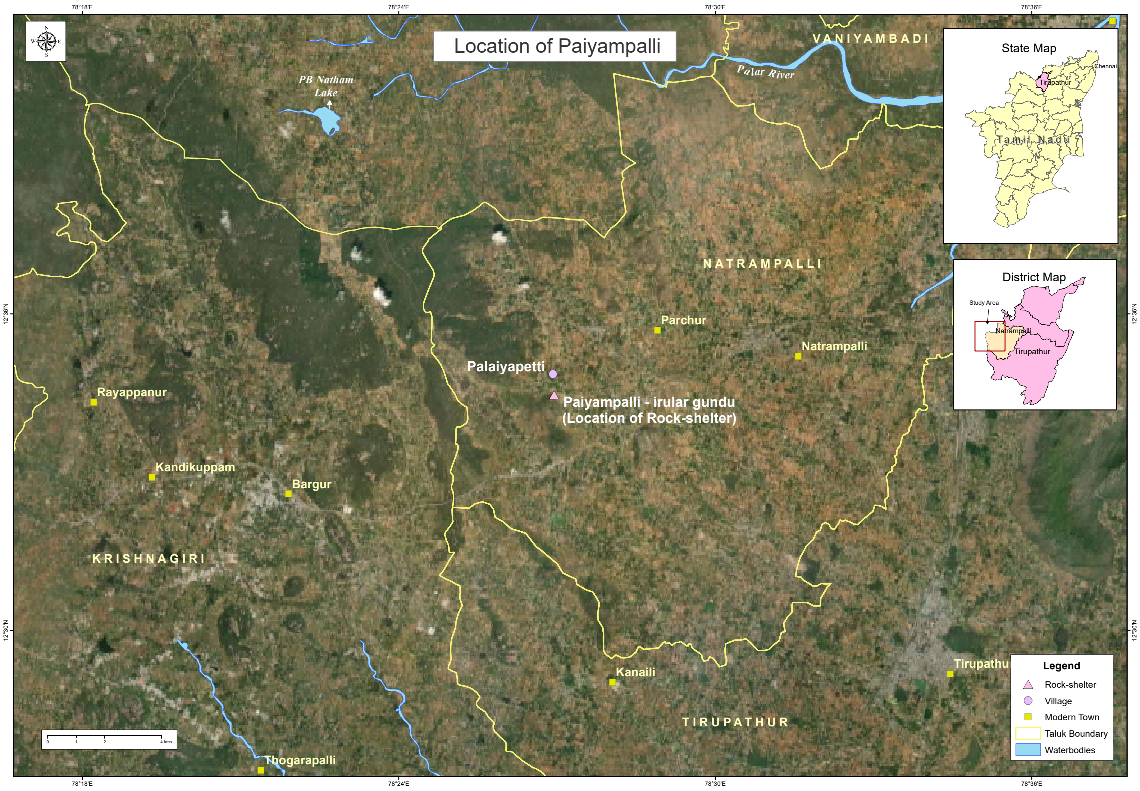
Fig. 4.31.8b Animal rider

4.32. Paiyampalli

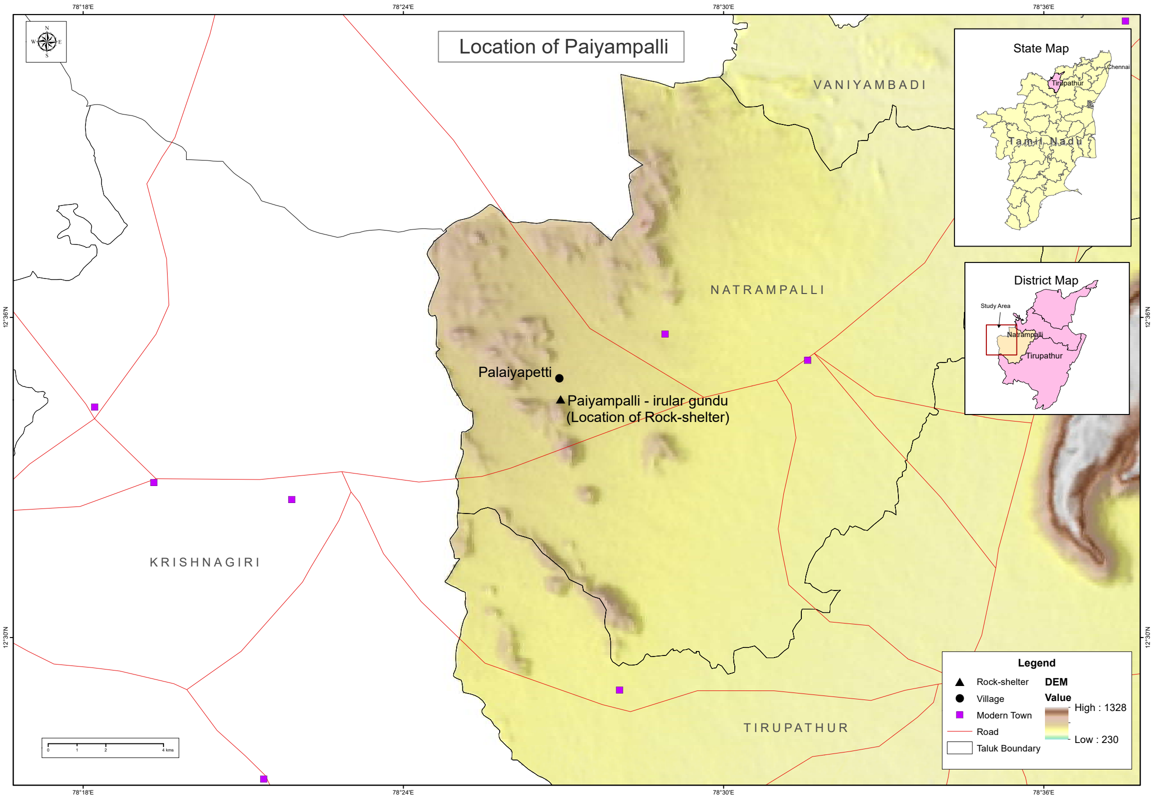
Paiyampalli (N 12.57440, E 78.44910) is a village in Tiruppattur taluk of Tiruppattur District (Maps 4.32.1-4.32.2). It is located at a distance of 5 km to the east of Barugur and 8 km to the west of Natrampalli on Krishnagiri-Tiruppattur road. The rock shelter is located behind the Paiyampalli hill, locally called as sothamalai. The shelter facing north is locally called as irular gundu. The shelter carries the paintings in white and red colours. The site Paiyampalli was excavated in 1964-65 by S.R. Rao. It revealed two cultural periods namely Neolithic and Megalithic. The foothill is covered with a habitational area (Figs. 4.32.1-4.32.2).

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 4.50 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 5.60 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 2.20 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2 m. The total painted area is about 4.40 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Paiyampalli
VANIYAMBADI
Palar River
PB Natham Lake
NATRAMPALLI
Parchur
Natrampalli
Palaiyapetti
Paiyampalli - irular gundu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Rayappanur
Kandikuppam
Bargur
KRISHNAGIRI
Kanaili
Tirupathur
TIRUPATHUR
Thogarapalli
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies

Map 4.32.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Paiyampalli
VANIYAMBADI
NATRAMPALLI
Palaiyapetti
Paiyampalli - irular gundu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
KRISHNAGIRI
TIRUPATHUR
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value
High : 1328
Low : 230

Map 4.32.2 Location of the rock shelter

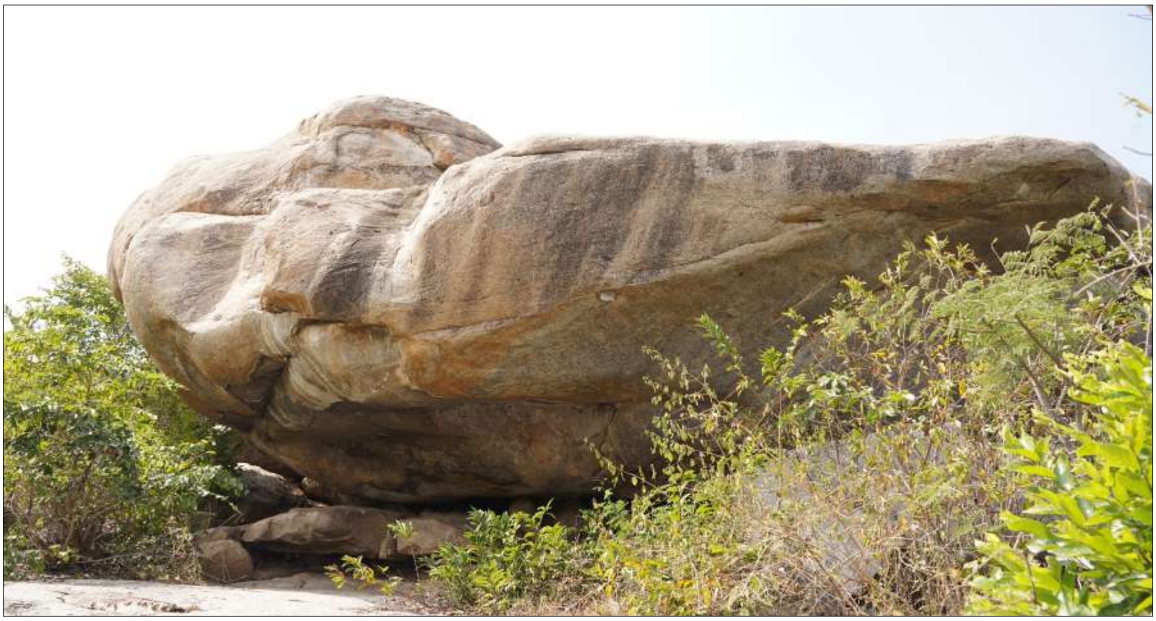


Fig. 4.32.1 General view of the rock shelter

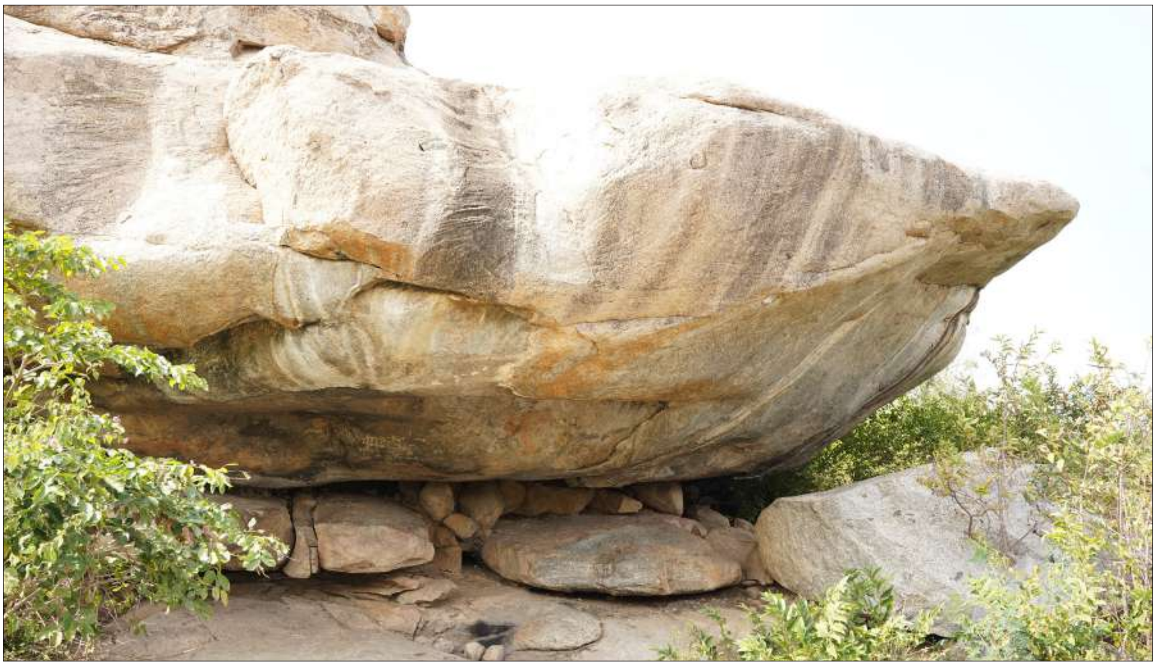


Fig. 4.32.2 General view of the rock shelter

Description

A large number of human figures, animal figures and symbols are painted here. Symbols are either painted individually or in groups. Human figures are shown involved in various activities like fighting, dancing, hunting, riding on animals and symbols, etc.

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of animal riding, humans, fish like sign, sun like sign, star, bird like sign, sleeping man, dancing scene can be seen in the Paiyampalli paintings.

Panel Description

The paintings represent numerous activities of humans in accordance with the scenes of nature. (Fig. 4.32.3a-4.32.3b).

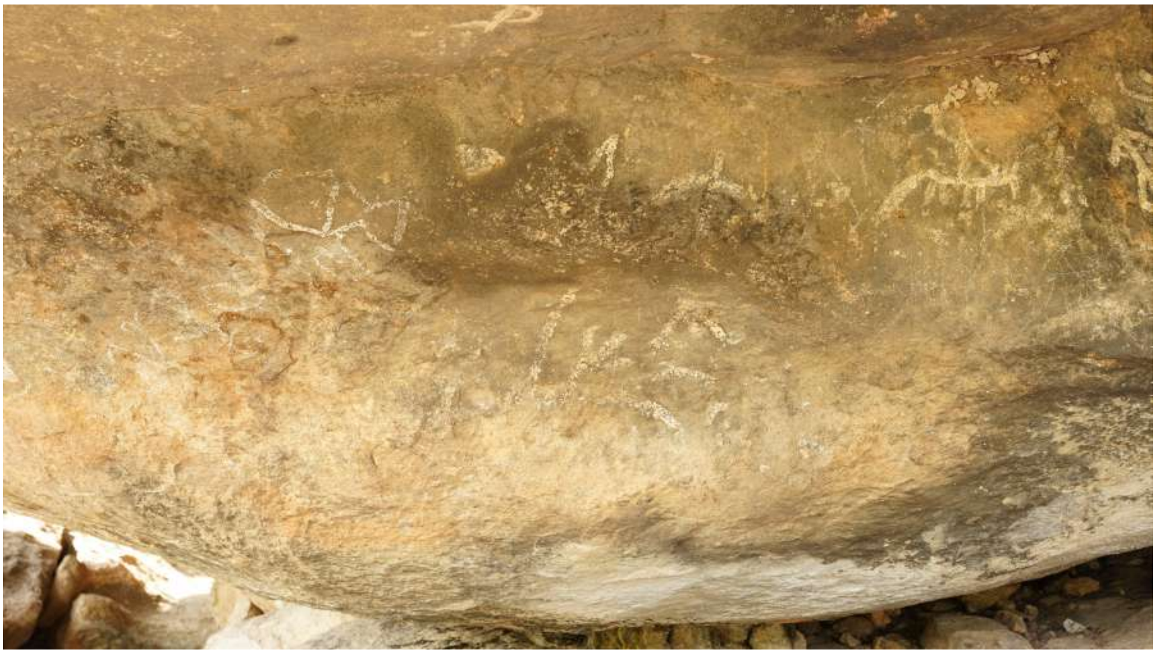


Fig. 4.32.3a Animal riding, humans and fish like sign

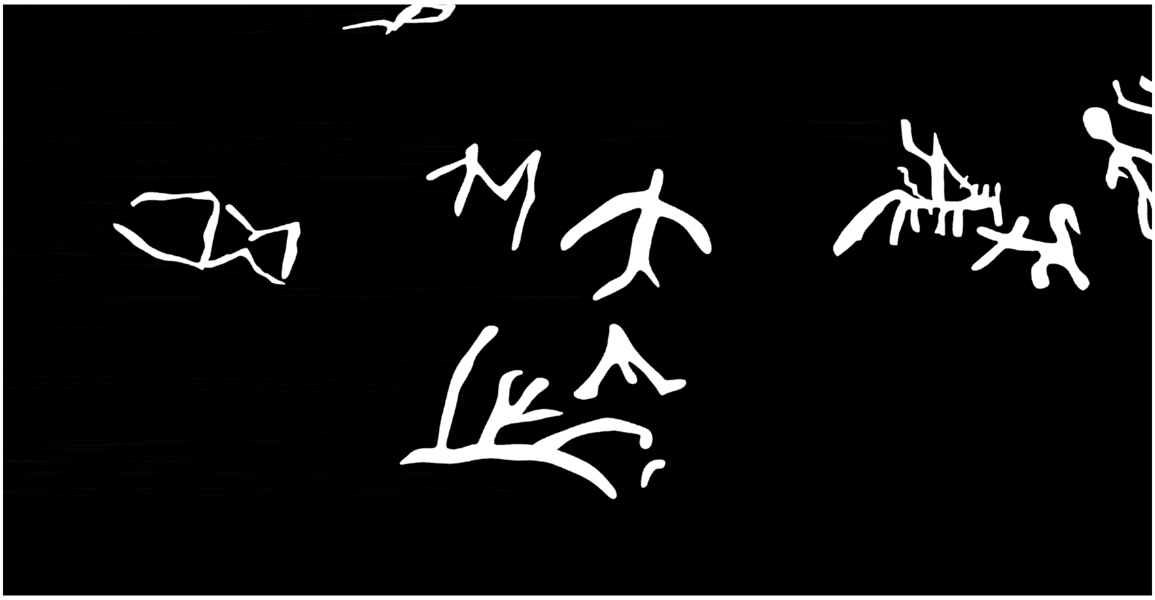


Fig. 4.32.3b Animal riding, humans and fish like sign

This figure has two paintings; the bottom painting is a sun with 7 rays. Another one is a human figure made in a thick line. A figure in a sitting position is holding a weapon. The head is round in shape without a headgear. Both paintings are made of white pigments and filled inside (Figs. 4.32.4a-4.32.4b).

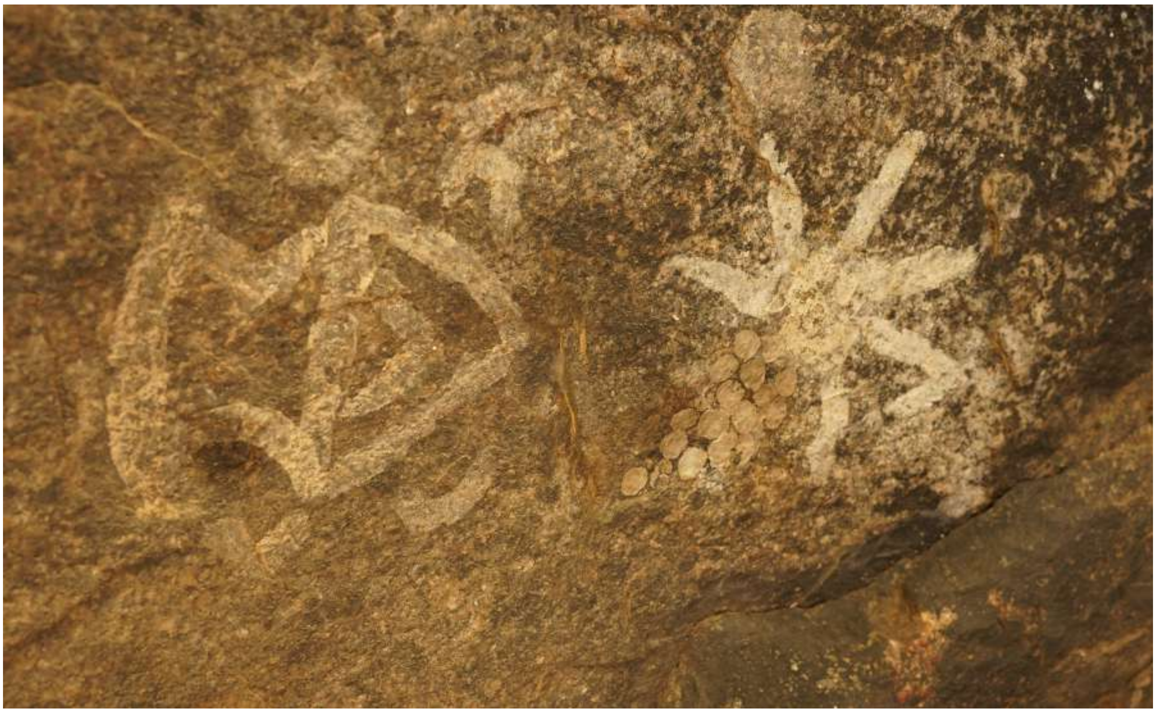


Fig. 4.32.4a Human and sun like sign

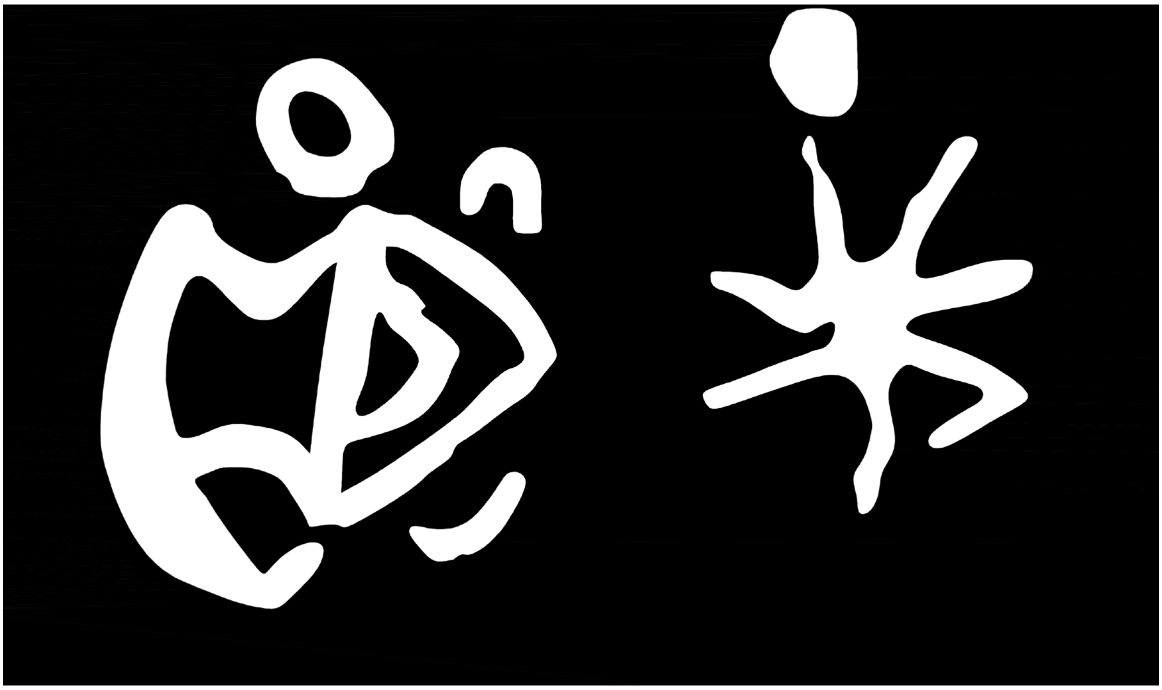


Fig. 4.32.4b Human and sun like sign

This painting depicts a horse-rider. The horse is drawn with four legs, with a long tail and the head is facing down with a long neck. The human figure is mounted on the horse and the left hand is holding a rope at the horse's neck and the right hand is raised up above the head and holding a weapon (Figs. 4.32.5a-4.32.5b).

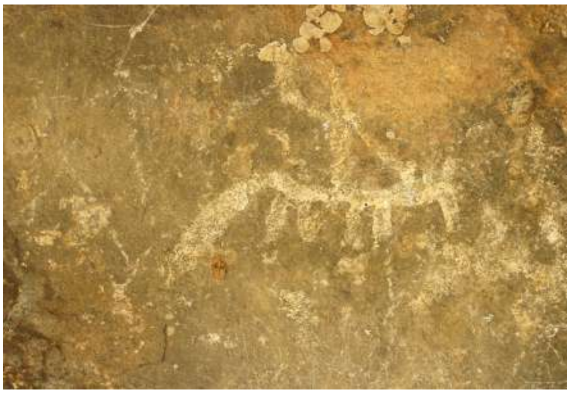


Fig. 4.32.5a Animal rider

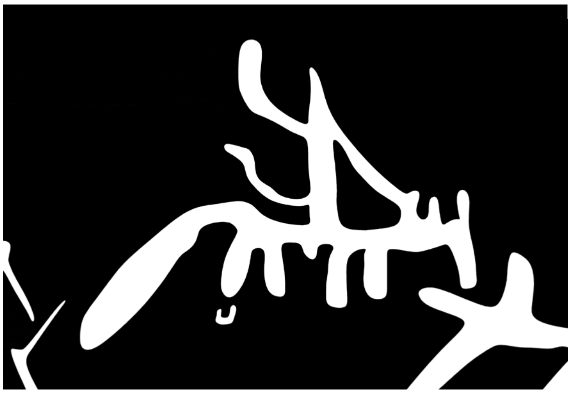


Fig. 4.32.5b Animal rider

The star symbol is depicted at the right side of the sun-like sign discussed above (Fig. 4.32.4). The paintings indicate scenes of natural view (Figs. 4.32.6a-4.32.6b).

This figure depicts the English letter 'V' shape symbol. It might be a symbol of a bird (Figs. 4.32.7a-4.32.7b).

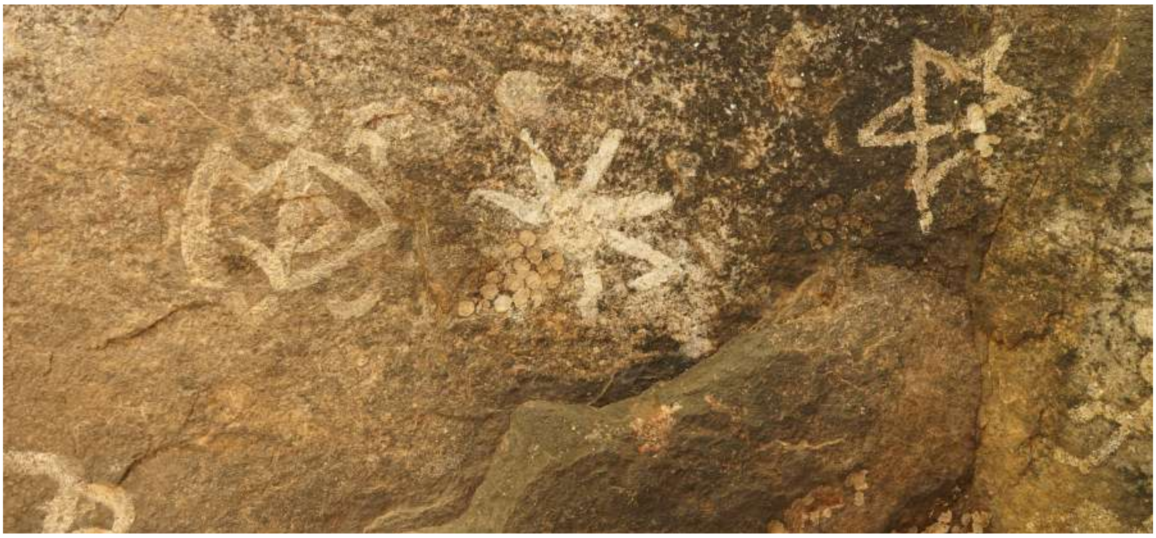


Fig. 4.32.6a Star

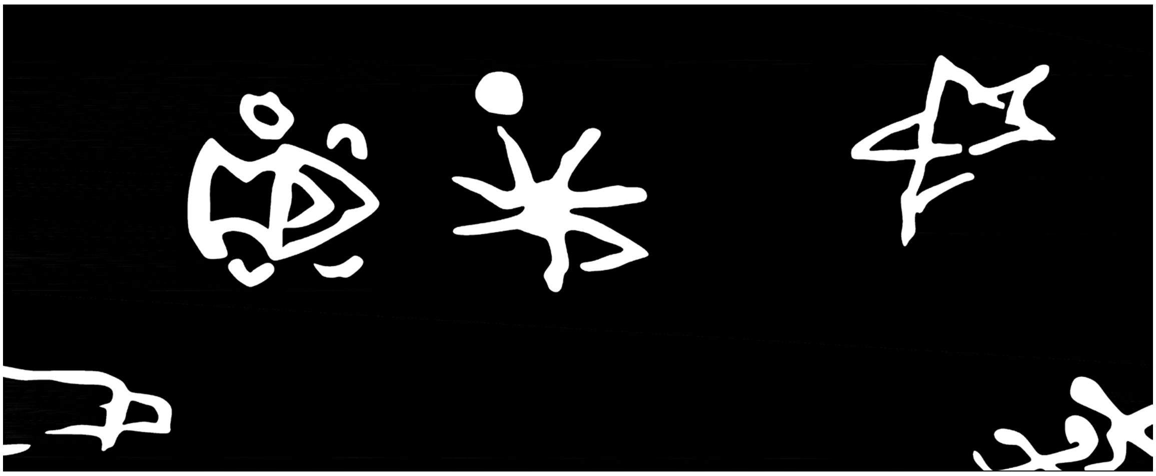


Fig. 4.32.6b Star

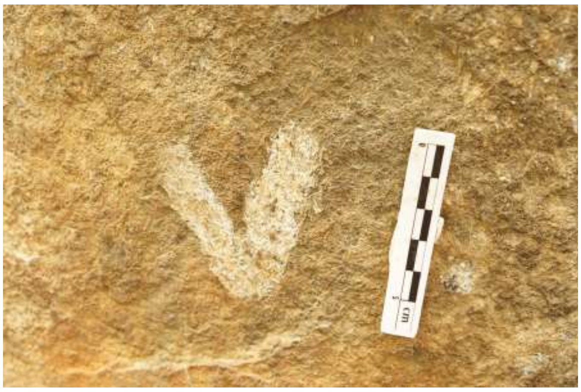


Fig. 4.32.7a Bird like sign

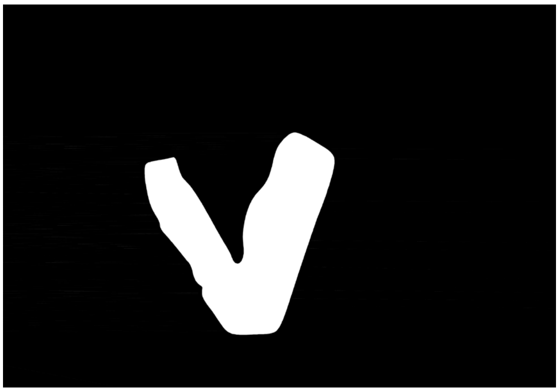


Fig. 4.32.7b Bird like sign

This painting shows a war scene between two groups. In one group, the human is depicted mounted on a horse. Five horses are depicted with four humans mounted on the animal, holding weapons and one horse without a human figure. A man, probably dead, is lying on the ground. Another group of people are seen seated on animals. All these paintings are made of white pigments (Figs. 4.32.8a-4.32.8b).

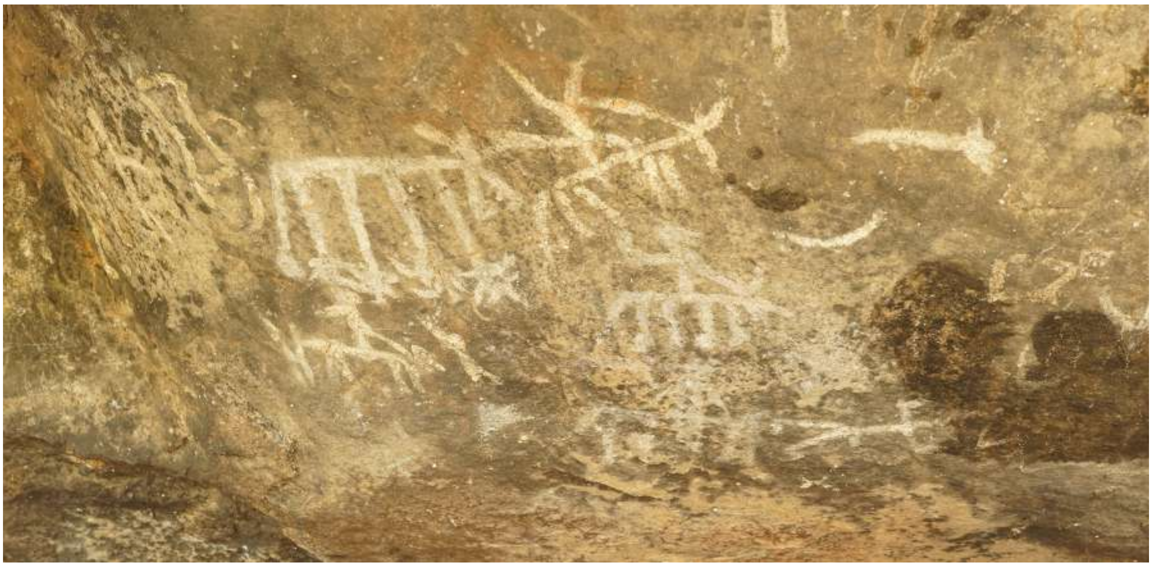


Fig. 4.32.8a Animal riders, animal, fish like sign and dead man

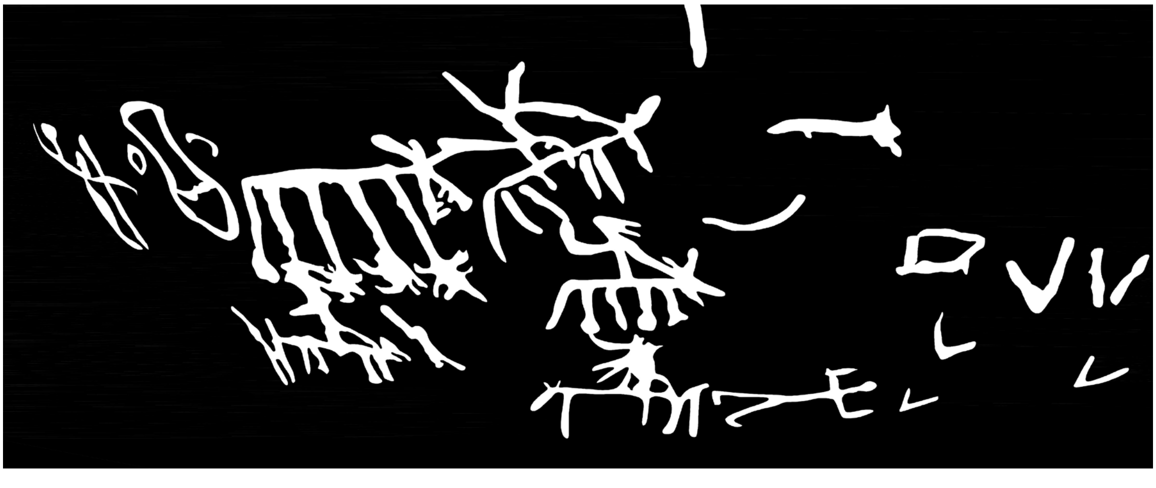


Fig. 4.32.8b Animal riders, animal, fish like sign and dead man

This panel comprises human figures and signs. Two human figures are depicted in a standing position and facing each other. The humans are shown with a round-faced head and straight-line body with legs and hands. Comb kind of sign is painted at the right end of the figure (Fig. 4.32.9a-4.32.9b).

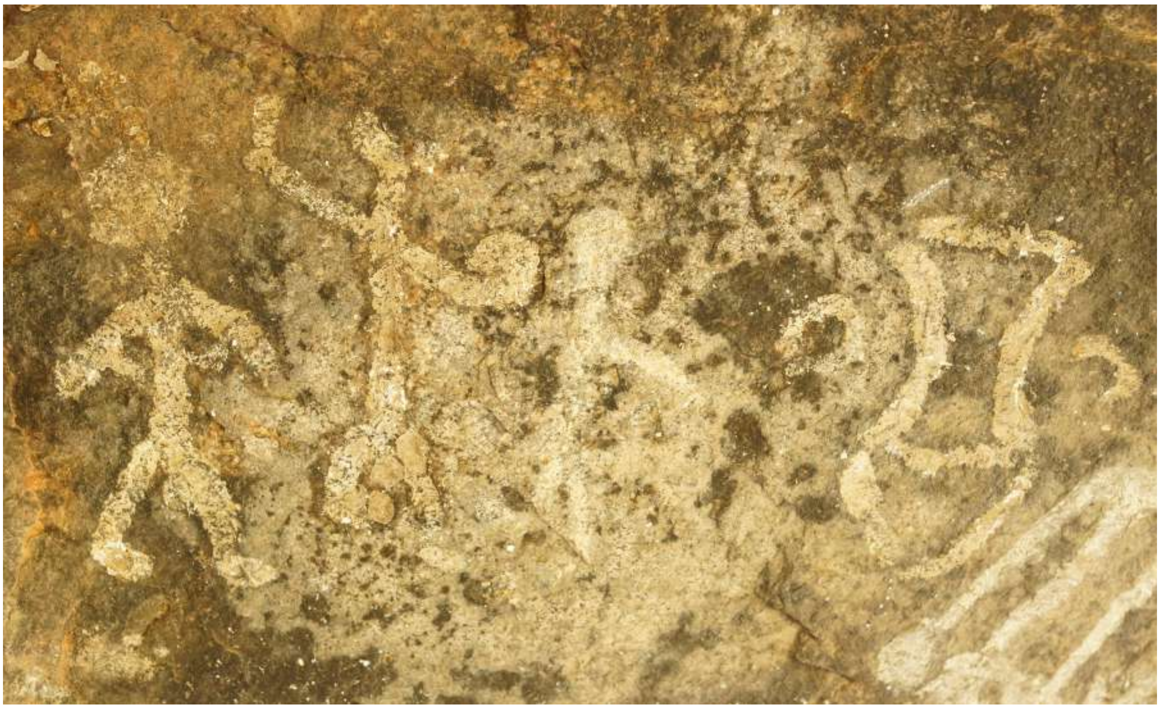


Fig. 4.32.9a. Human figures and fish like sign

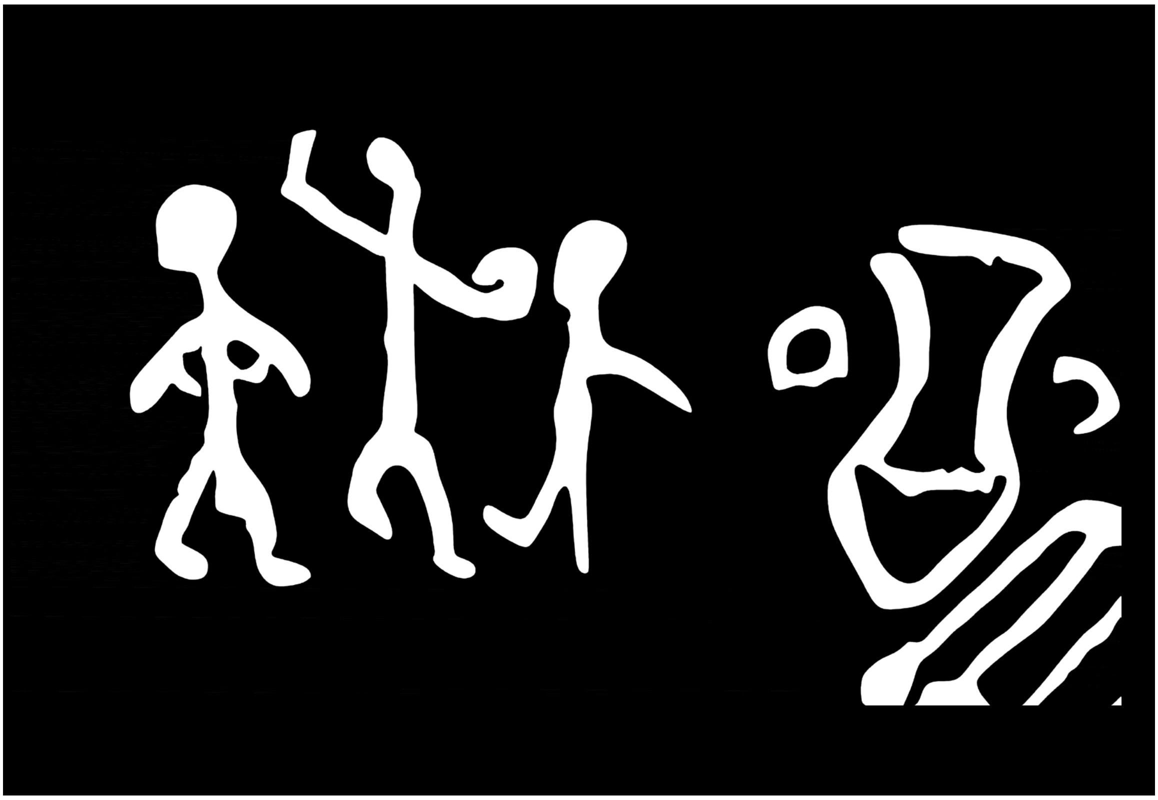


Fig. 4.32.9b. Human figures and fish like sign

One-star symbol is painted in white pigment (Fig. 4.32.10a-4.32.10b).

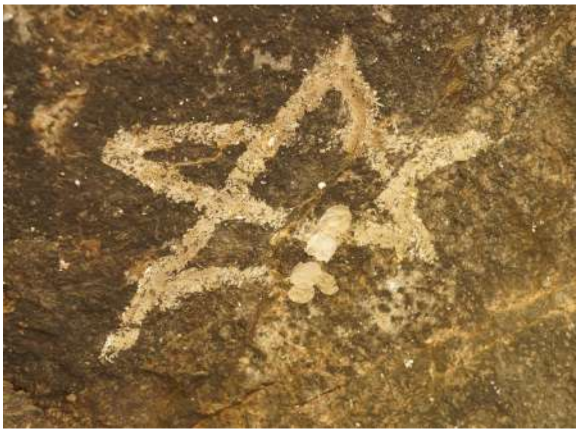


Fig. 4.32.10a Star

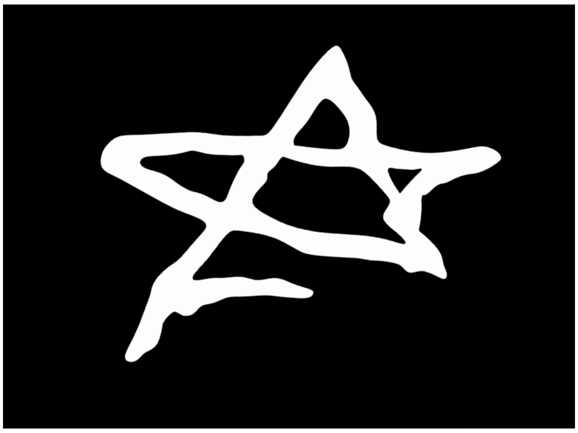


Fig. 4.32.10b Star

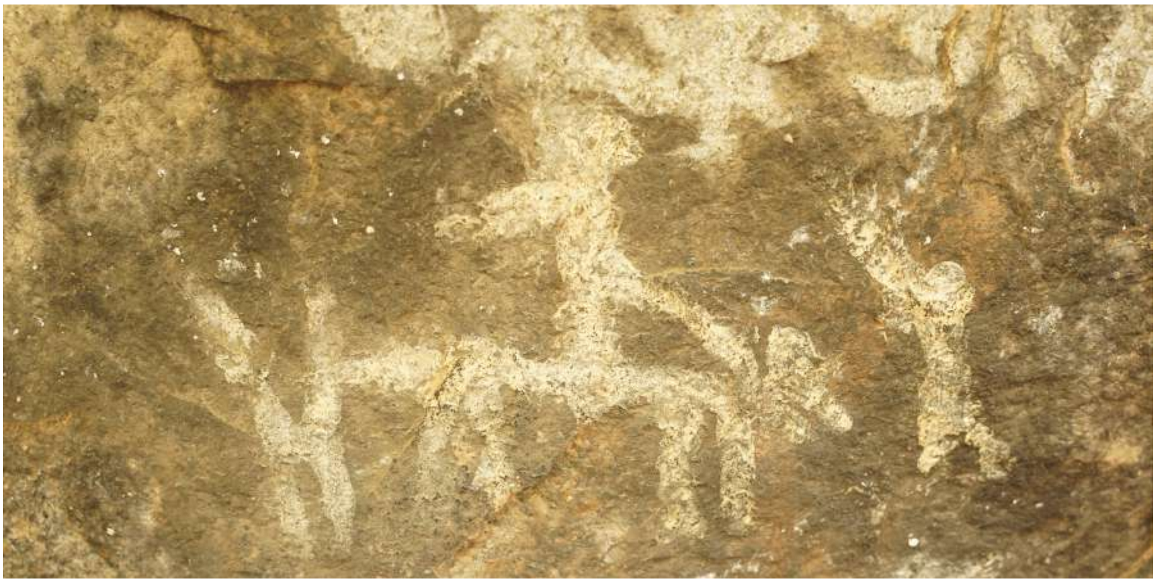


Fig. 4.32.11a Animal rider

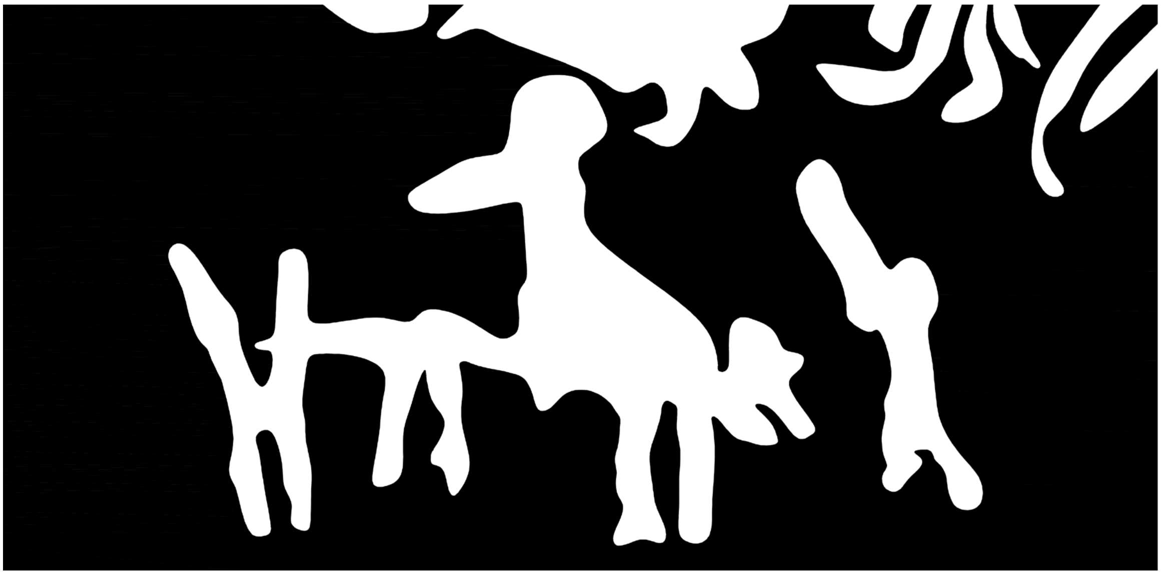


Fig. 4.32.11b Animal rider

This figure depicts a human figure sitting on a horse. The horse is shown with four legs with a long tail. The human figure is holding the horse in one hand and the right hand is holding a weapon. Another human is standing in front of the rider. The rest of them are not clear (Fig. 4.32.11a-4.32.11b).

In this painting, one human is sitting on the horse holding a weapon, in front of him another human body is in lying position. Perhaps he was a victim of the fight (Fig. 4.32.12a-4.32.12b).

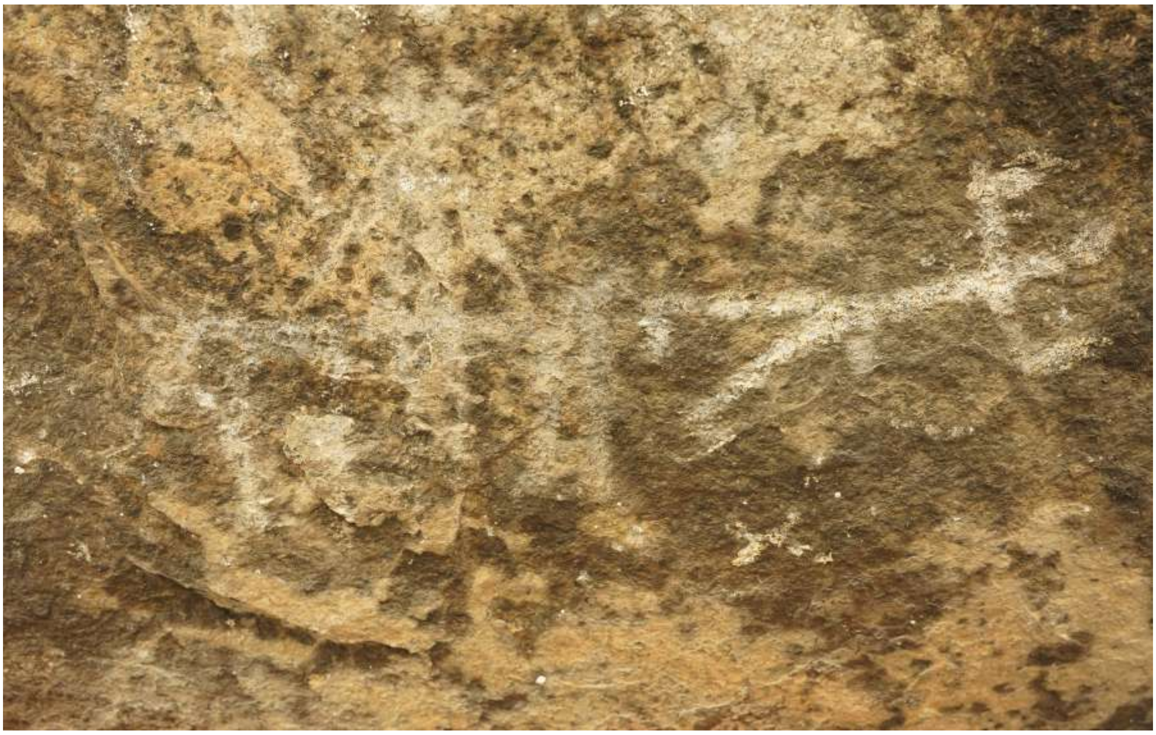


Fig. 4.32.12a Animal rider and man lying

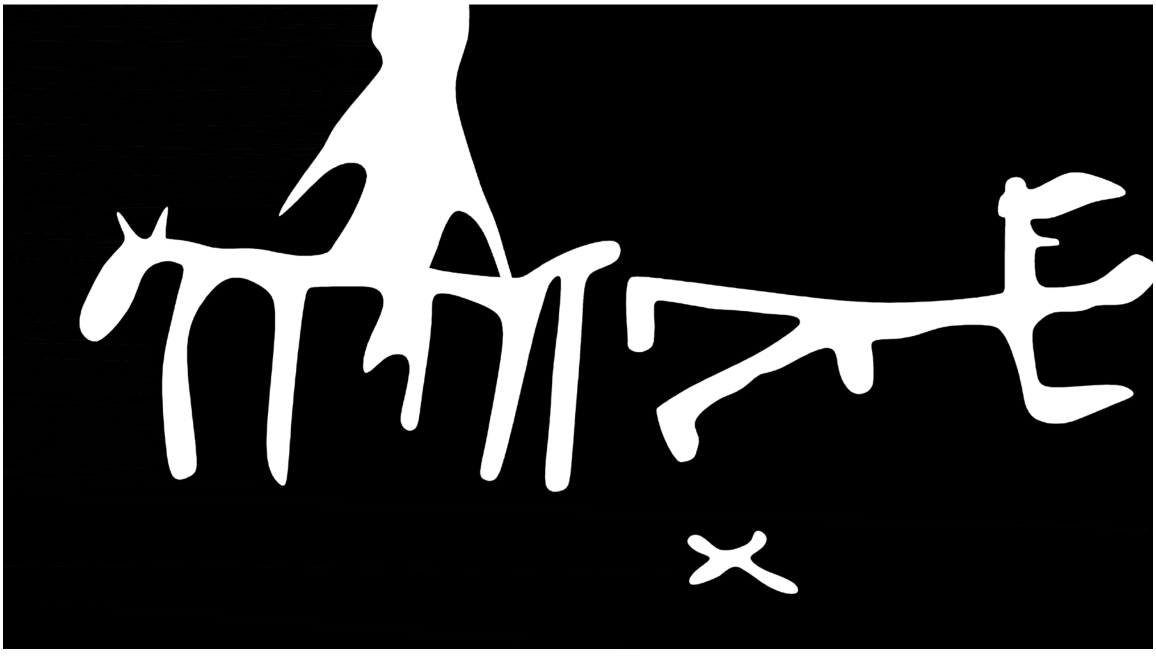


Fig. 4.32.12b Animal rider and man lying

This painting depicts geometric and non-geometric designs. Two 'V' shaped signs possibly indicating flying birds are seen in one frame. At the top of it, a triangle shape is drawn (Fig. 4.32.13a-4.32.13b).

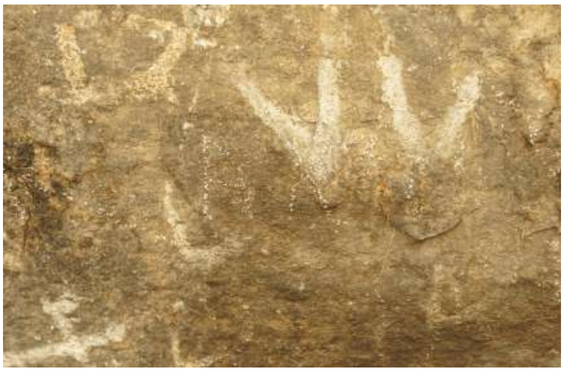


Fig. 4.32.13a Bird like signs

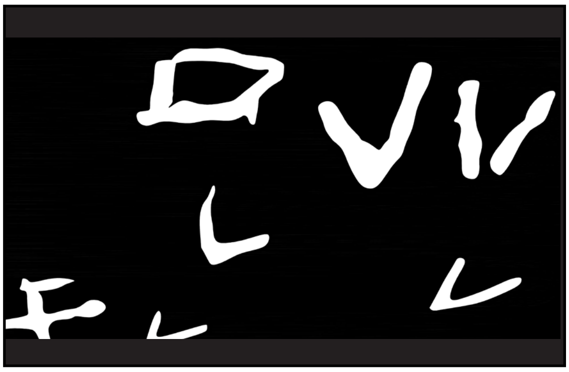


Fig. 4.32.13b Bird like signs

This painting depicts three human figures with an animal face, it might be a head-gear. One figure is a aggressive man with a strong body with a big face, hands and fingers of him are very big and thick. The remaining is a couple but smaller in size, they hold each other's hands out of fear or trying to escape from the threat of the monster (Fig. 4.32.14a-4.32.14b).

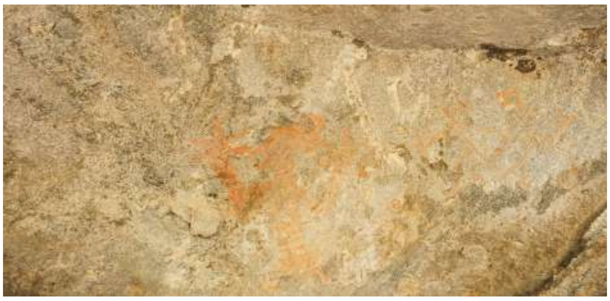


Fig. 4.32.14a Couple and human

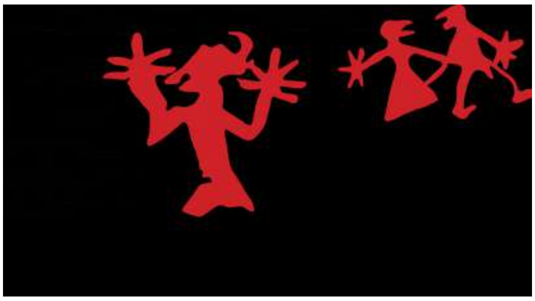


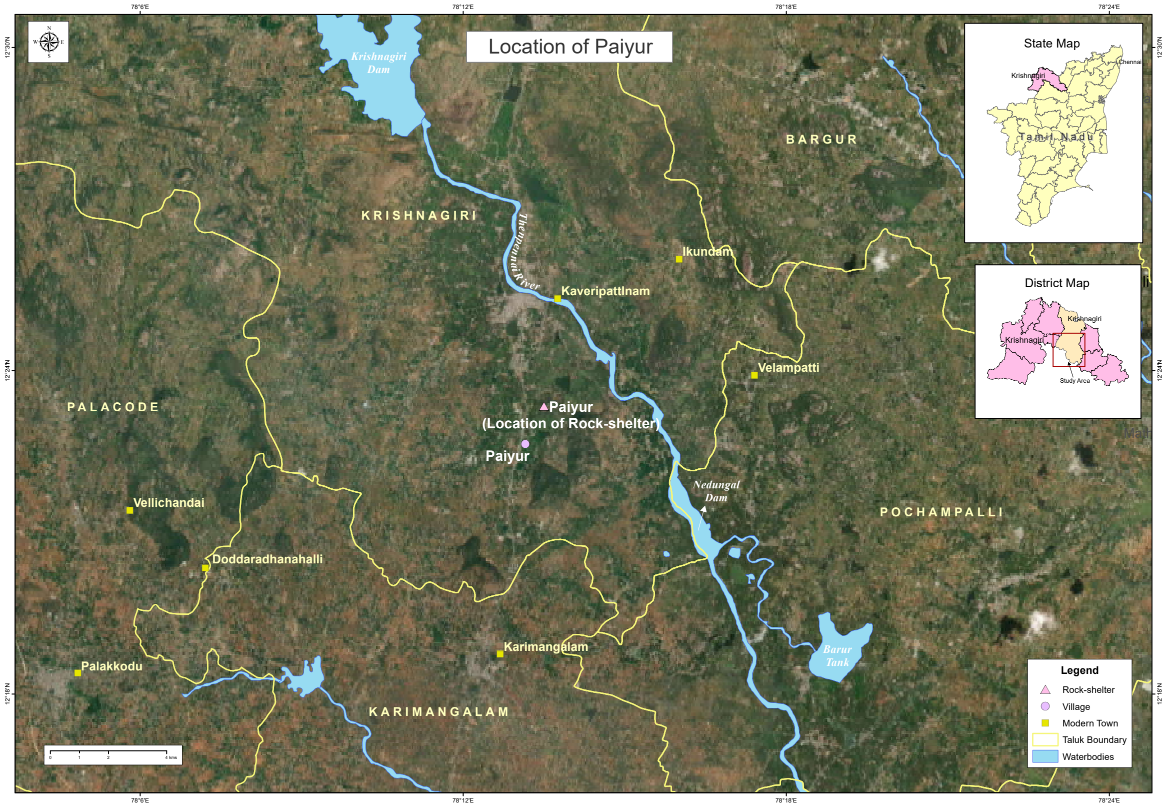
Fig. 4.32.14b Couple and human

4.33. Paiyur

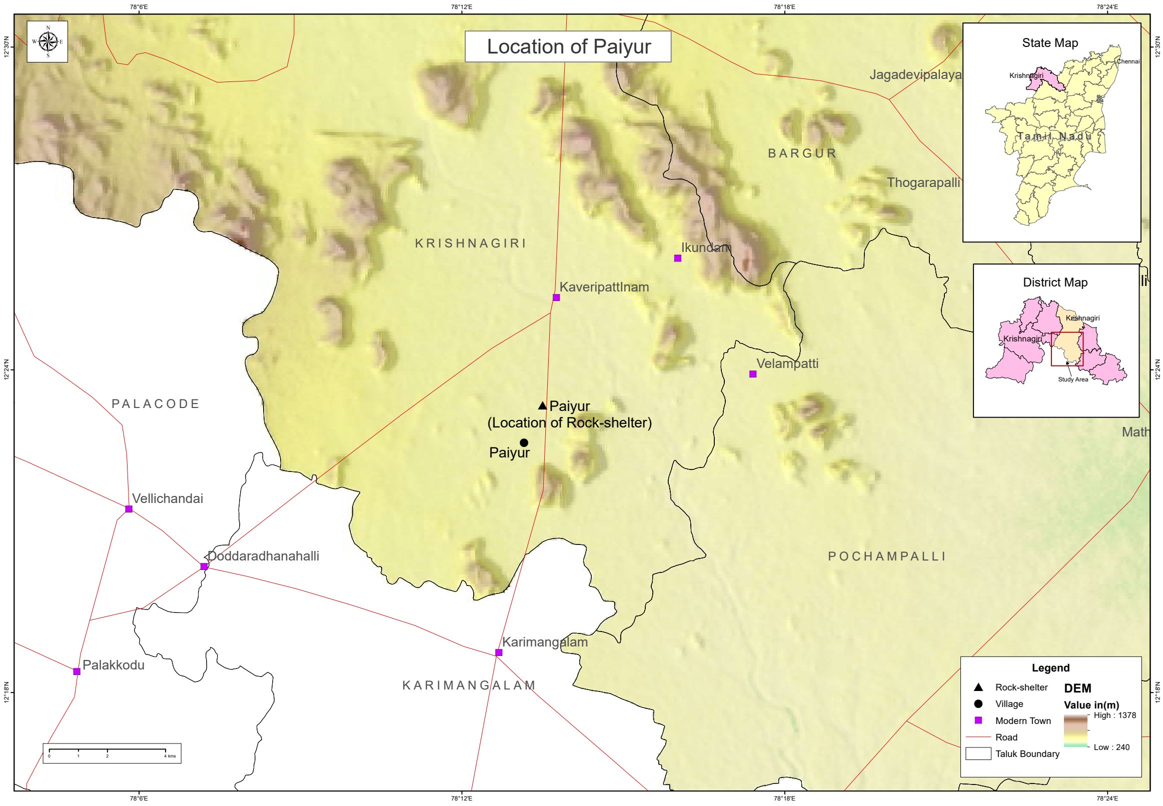
Paiyur (12.38889 N; 78.22500 E) village is situated to the south of Kaveripattinam on the Krishnagiri-Salem highway (Map 4.33.1-4.33.2). A small hamlet, called Konarkottai, is located about 1 km on the eastern side of the village. In this hamlet, a small hillock is located on the western side of the Konarkottai and the hill is locally known as Chokkanguddai. The shelter facing north is found on the western part of the village. The shelter is having paintings drawn both in red and white colours (Figs. 4.33.1-4.33.2).

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 1.30 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 4.30 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 3.40 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 4 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Paiyur
Krishnagiri Dam
BARGUR
KRISHNAGIRI
Thenpennai River
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
Velampatti
PALACODE
Paiyur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Paiyur
Nedungal Dam
POCHAMPALLI
Vellichandai
Doddaradhanahalli
Karimangalam
Barur Tank
Palakkodu
KARIMANGALAM
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N
12°18'N

Map 4.33.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Paiyur
Jagadevipalaya
BARGUR
Thogarapalli
KRISHNAGIRI
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
Velampatti
PALACODE
Paiyur
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Paiyur
Vellichandai
Doddaradhanahalli
POCHAMPALLI
Karimangalam
Palakkodu
KARIMANGALAM
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°6'E
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°30'N
12°24'N
12°18'N

Map 4.33.2 Location of the rock shelter

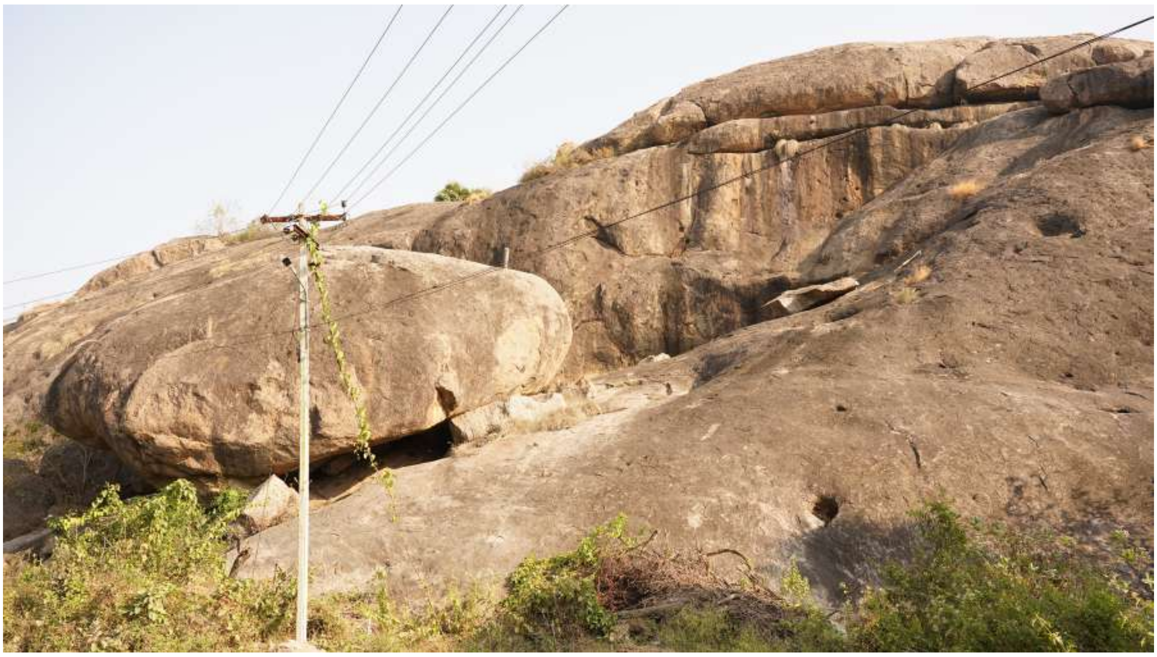


Fig. 4.33.1 General view of the rock shelter

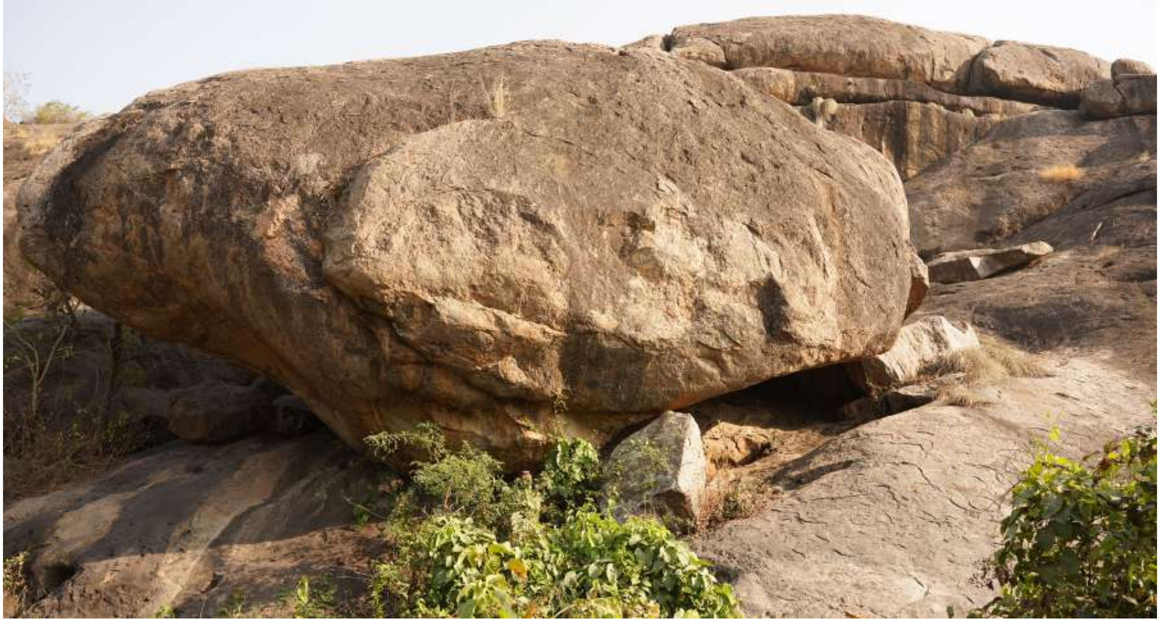


Fig. 4.33.2 General view of the rock shelter

Description

There are three triangle-like designs drawn side by side. It may be hillocks, just below that some symbols are seen in white colour. It is noteworthy that they are widely found in this region. The same symbol is found in red colour also.

The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of fish like signs, a zigzag pattern, a damaru like sign and English alphabetic letters like "C and M" could be seen in the Paiyur paintings.

Panel Description

This panel of painting is made with white pigments. These are symbols/designs and fish symbols. Seven signs are depicted in this panel. Those are fish symbol, arrow mark lines, square shape symbol and lamp kind of symbol (Fig. 4.33.3a-4.33.3b).

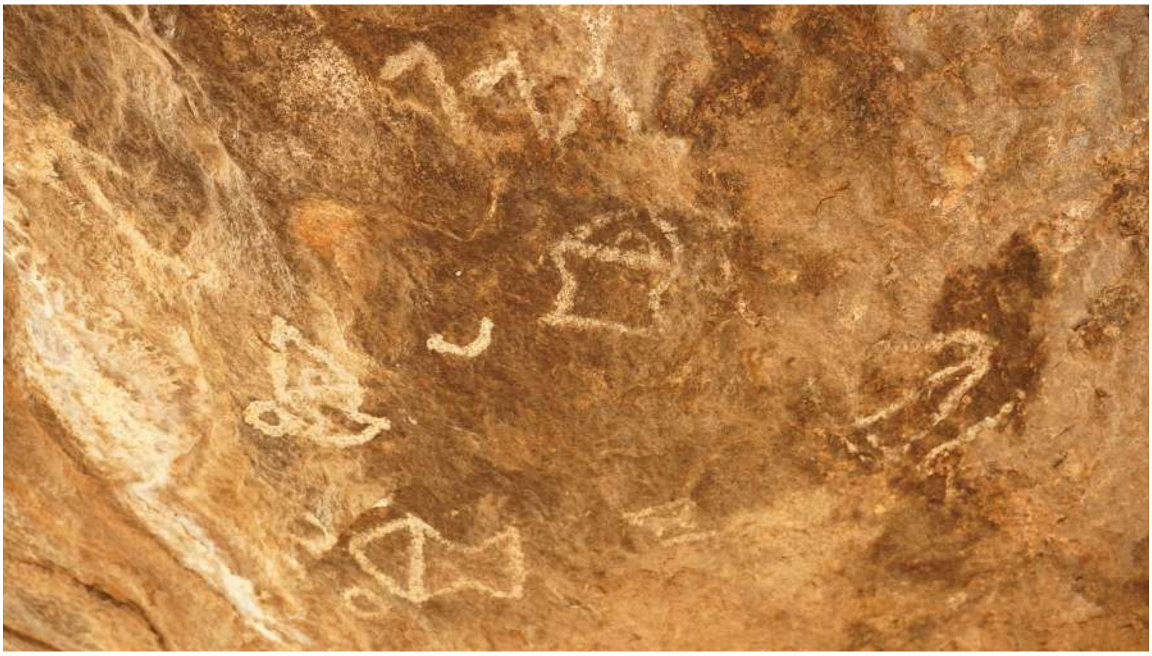


Fig. 4.33.3a Fish like signs

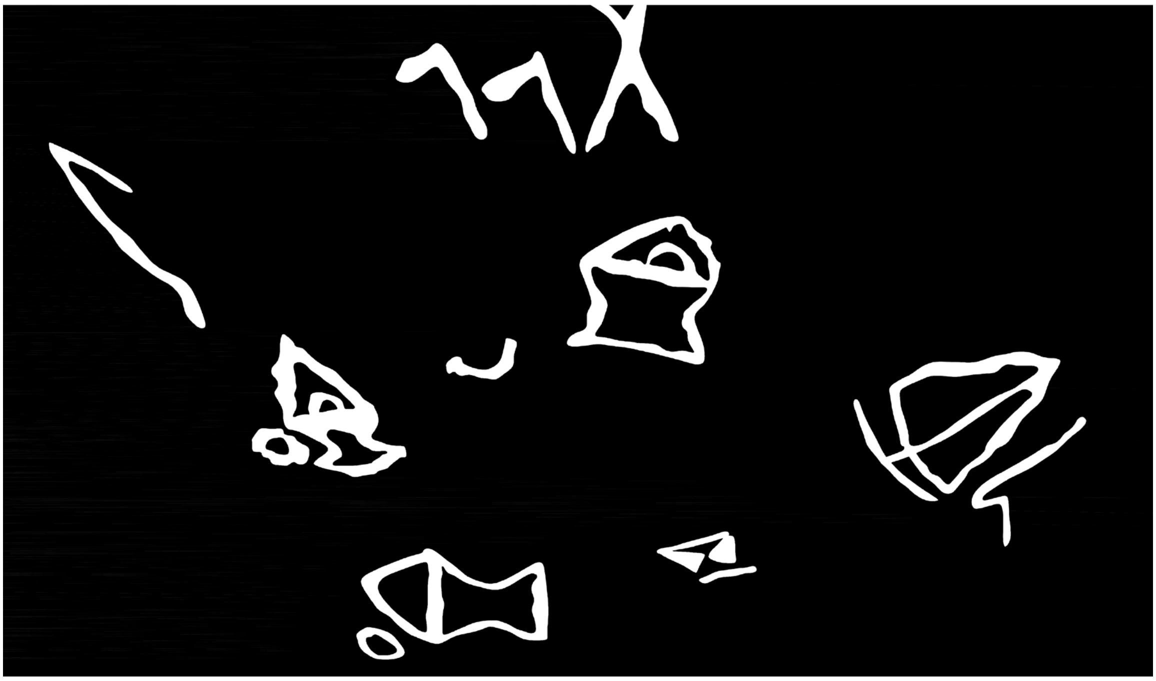
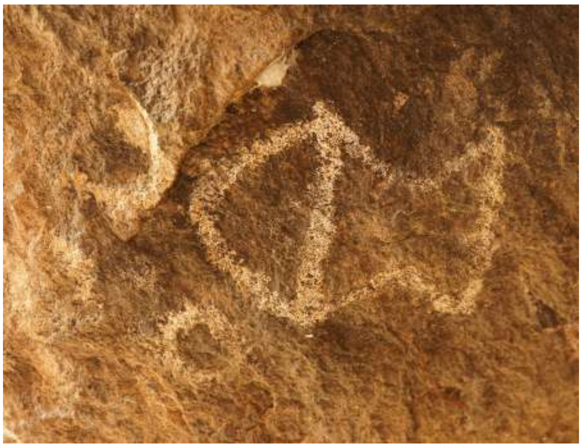


Fig. 4.33.3b Fish like signs

Fish symbol is drawn in a horizontal manner with white pigment. The fish is clearly visible with thick outer lines. A line is drawn at the centre of the figure. The tail is also depicted. The front of face have two circles, which may be bubbles of the fish (Fig. 4.33.4a-4.33.4b).



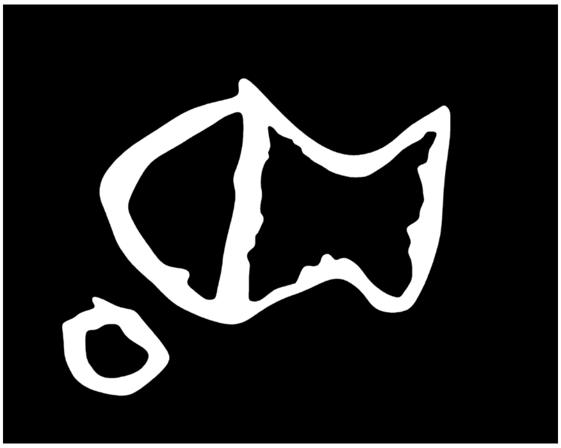
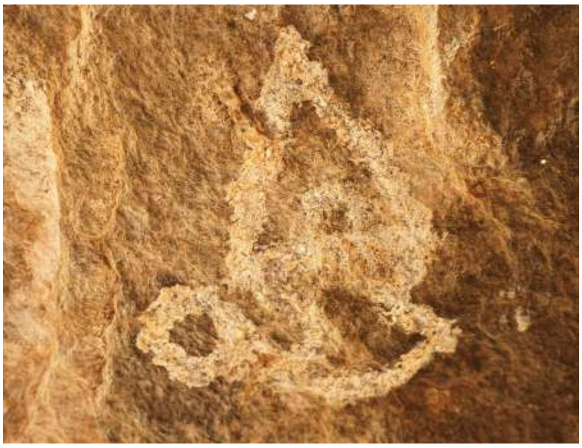


Fig. 4.33.4a Fish like sign

Fig. 4.33.4b Fish like sign

This symbol is drawn in a triangular shape placed vertically. There is a projection at the centre of the figure. Which may be a fish with bubbles drawn next to it. This painting is made of white pigment (Fig. 4.33.5a-4.33.5b).



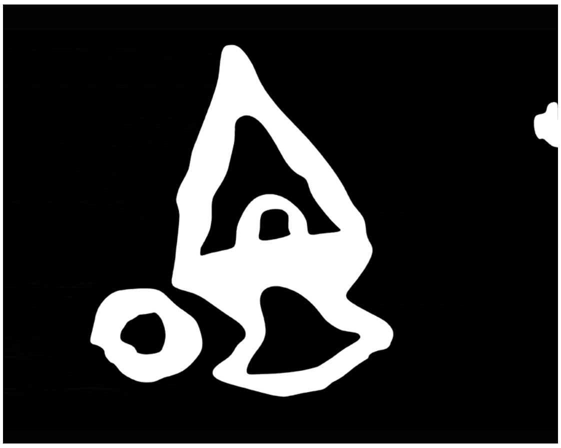
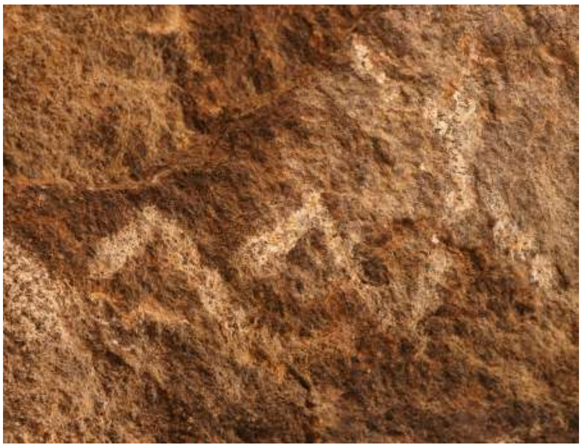


Fig. 4.33.5a Fish like sign

Fig. 4.33.5b Fish like sign

Multiple inverted 'V' symbols are drawn. This symbol might be an indication of mount and painted with white pigment (Fig. 4.33.6a-4.33.6b).



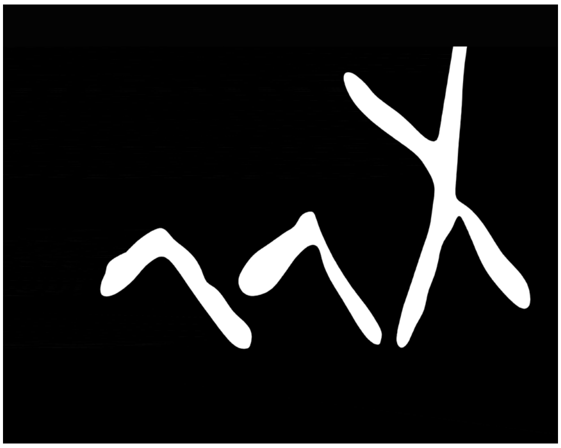


Fig. 4.33.6a Zigzag pattern

Fig. 4.33.6b Zigzag pattern

A fish is drawn with a thick white line. The face and body portion are divided by a straight horizontal line. Tail is also drawn in a curved shape (Fig. 4.33.7a-4.33.7b).

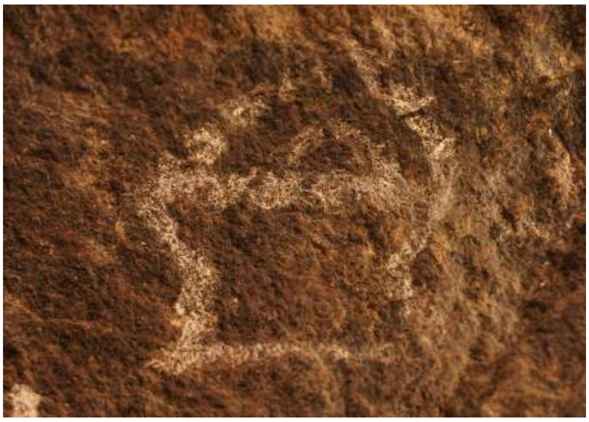


Fig. 4.33.7a Fish like sign

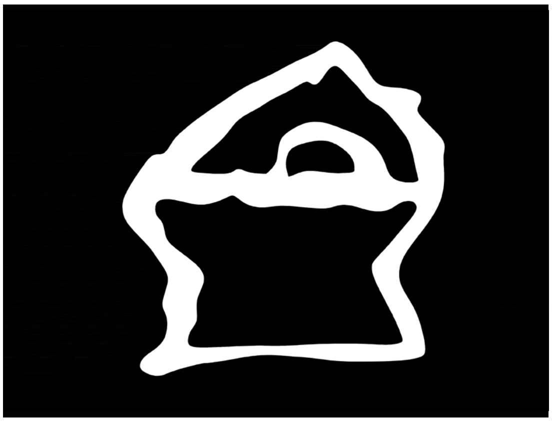


Fig. 4.33.7b Fish like sign

The fish-like figure is painted in a vertical manner. It is drawn with red pigment. The face of fish is in a triangular shape and the body portion is drawn with an hour-glass shape (Fig. 4.33.8a-4.33.8b).

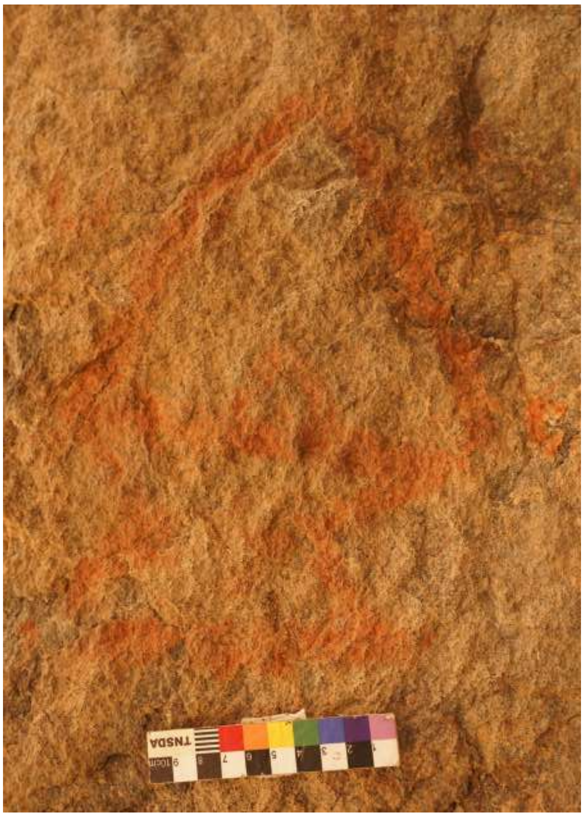


Fig. 4.33.8a Fish like sign

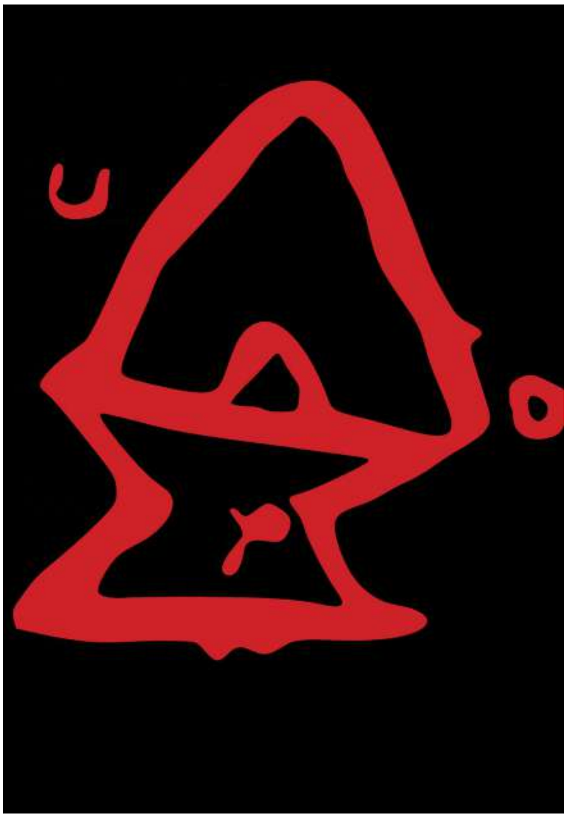


Fig. 4.33.8b Fish like sign

The square shape symbol is depicted with white pigment and it is filled with two crossed lines. It looks like a damaru or udukai (Fig. 4.33.9a-4.33.9b).

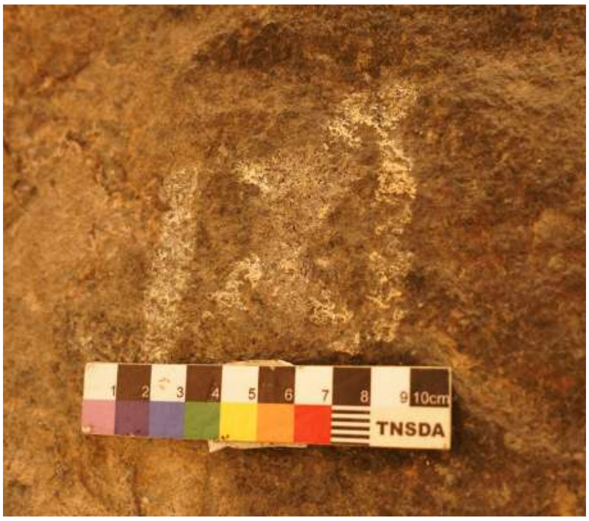


Fig. 4.33.9a Damaru like sign

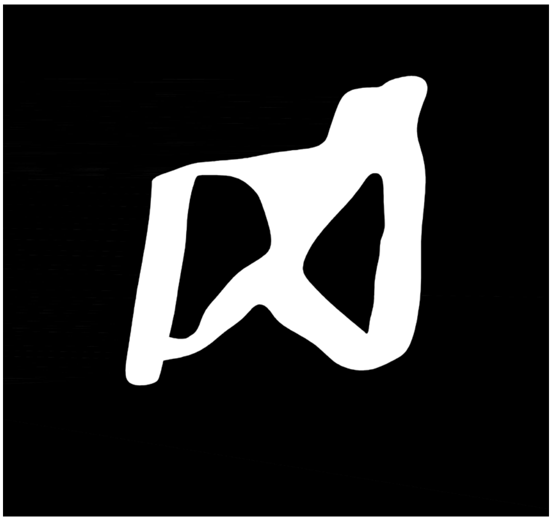


Fig. 4.33.9b Damaru like sign

The white pigment images are showing symbols like modern English alphabetic letters "C and M" (Fig. 4.33.10a-4.33.10b).

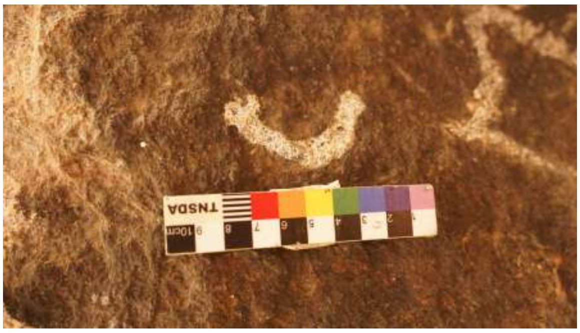


Fig. 4.33.10a English alphabetic letters like "C and M"

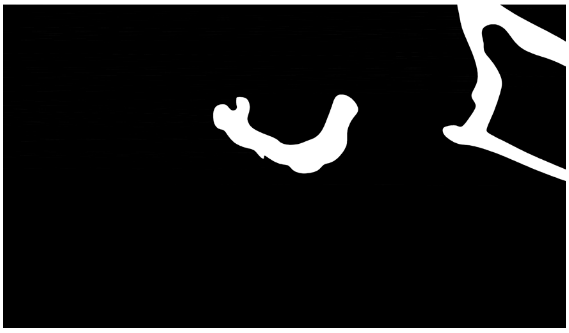


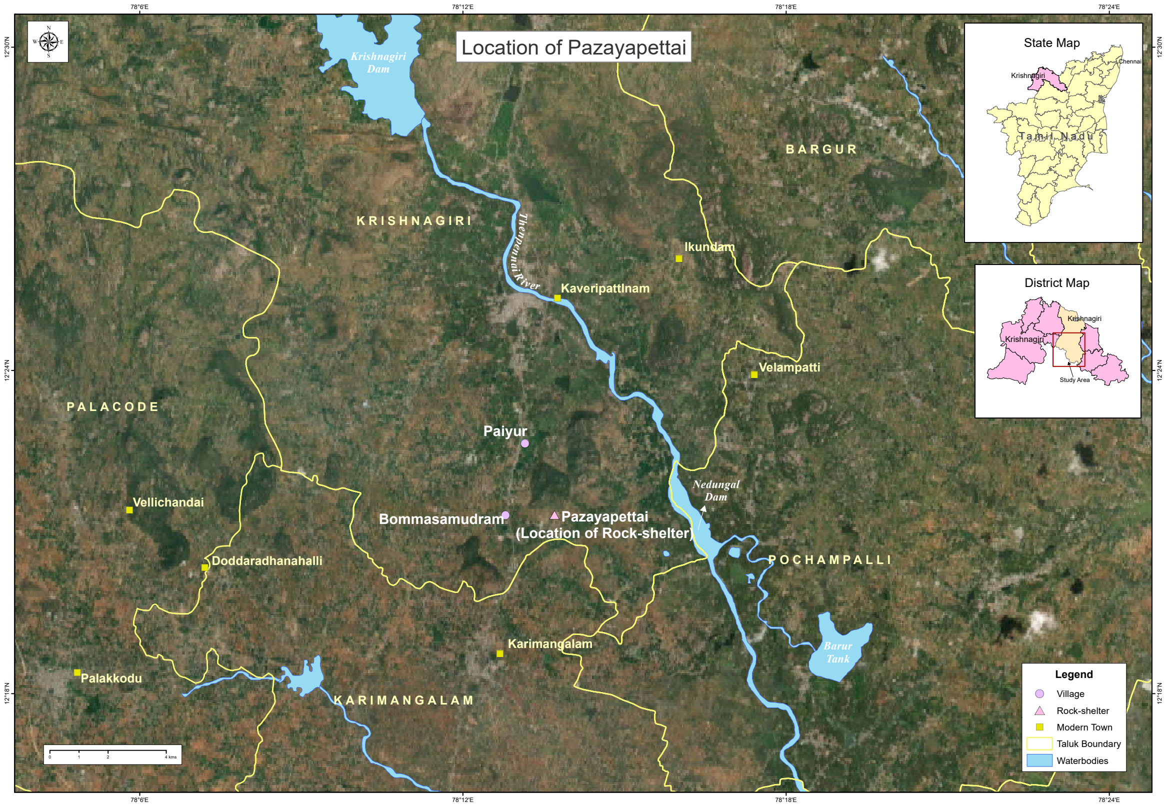
Fig. 4.33.10b English alphabetic letters like "C and M"

4.34. Pazhaiyapettai

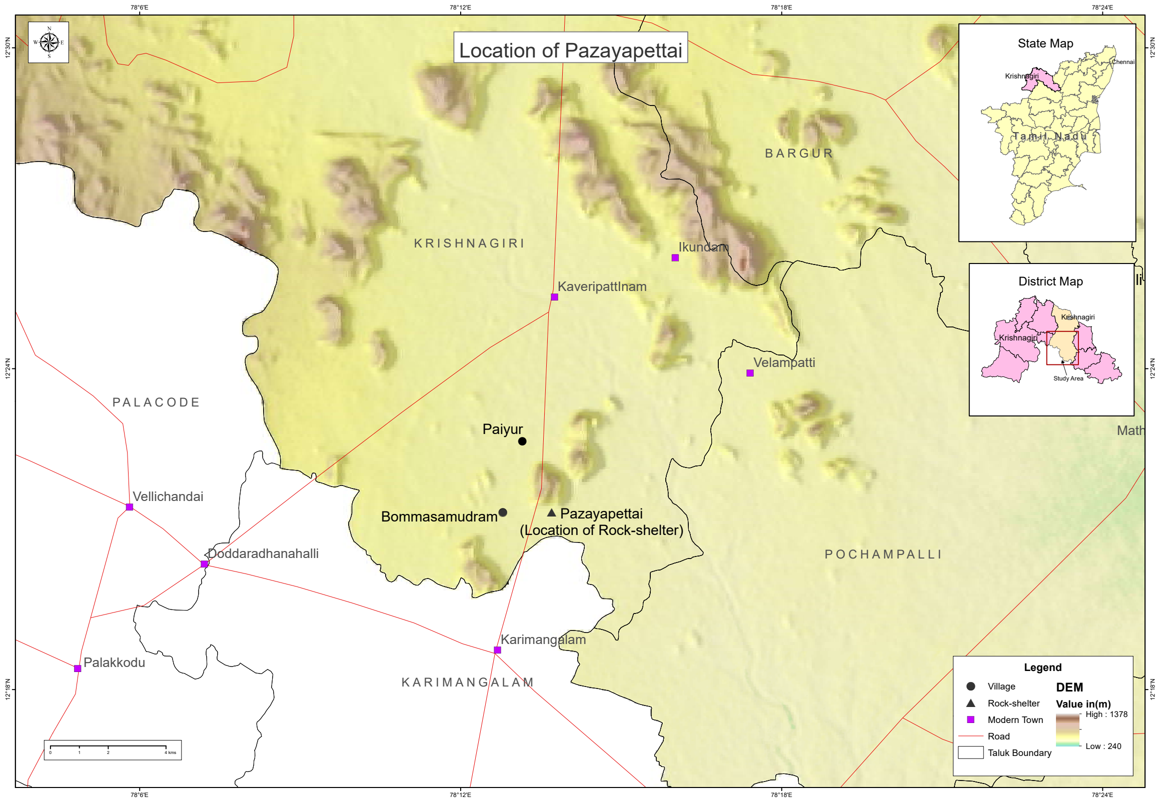
Pazhaiyapettai (N 12.35532, E 78.22830) is situated to the north of Puthupettai, which lies at a distance of 4 km from Krishnagiri (Maps 4.34.1-4.34.2). The rock art site is noticed on the north-east part of Pazhaiyapettai. One has to travel on Krishnagiri-Maharajakadai main road and take a diversion at Kalabairavar temple road to reach the Hanuman temple. At the top of the temple, the rock shelter is noticed. A boulder inside the rock shelter contains rock painting in white pigment (Figs. 4.34.1-4.34.2).

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 80 cm, the total length of the rock shelter is 1.50 mm and the total height of the inclined surface is about 1.30 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 1 m. The total painted area is about 70x45cm. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Pazayapettai
Krishnagiri Dam
BARGUR
KRISHNAGIRI
Thenpennai River
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Velampatti
PALACODE
Paiyur
Nedungal Dam
Vellichandai
Bommasamudram
Pazayapettai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
POCHAMPALLI
Doddaradhanahalli
Barur Tank
Karimangalam
Palakkodu
KARIMANGALAM
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies

Map 4.34.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Pazayapettai
BARGUR
KRISHNAGIRI
Ikundam
Kaveripattlnam
Velampatti
PALACODE
Paiyur
Vellichandai
Bommasamudram
Pazayapettai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Doddaradhanahalli
POCHAMPALLI
Karimangalam
Palakkodu
KARIMANGALAM
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Village
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.34.2 Location of the rock shelter

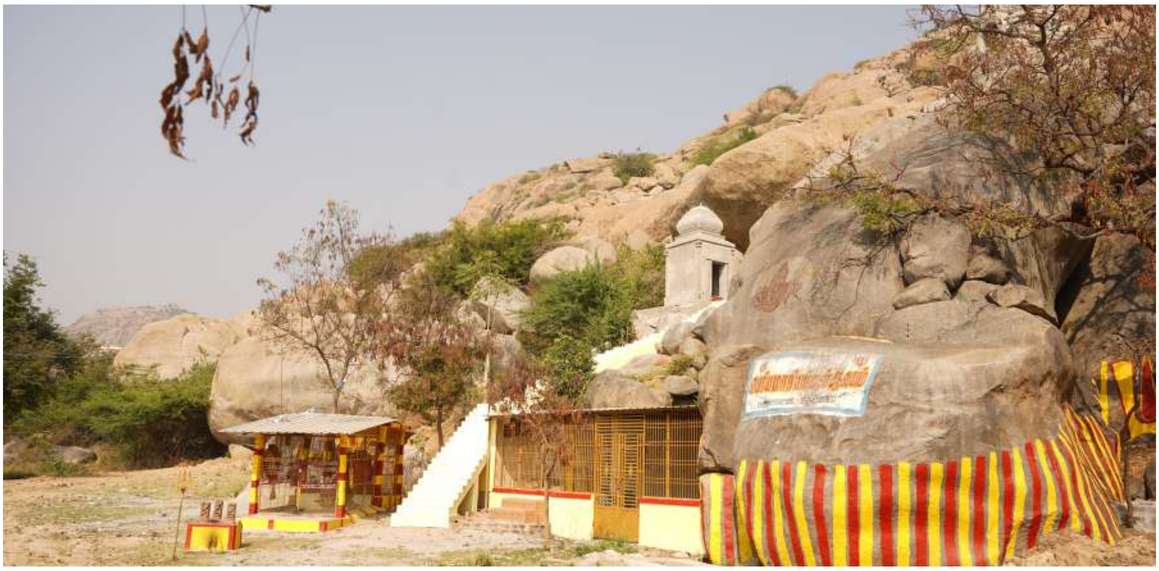


Fig. 4.34.1 *General view of the rock shelter*

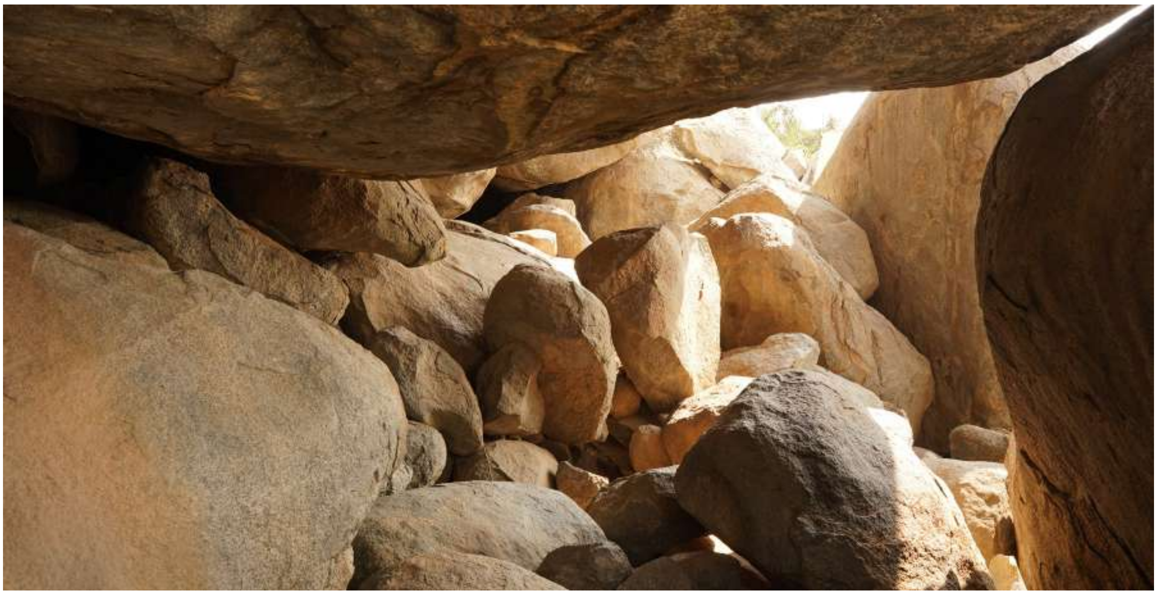


Fig. 4.34.2 *General view of the rock shelter*

Description

There are some paintings drawn on the rock surface above the Kala Bhairava / Sanjeevi Temple. It is a place for surveillance or retreat for a few during the rainy season. The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of floral design, two animal riders, a dog-like figure and a few geometric circles.

Panel Description

In this panel, one geometric design/ symbol with a circular shape at the centre and many curved lines is drawn all around. On the left side, a human figure is shown riding a horse. The human figure is shown with a wide body holding the rope of a horse in the right hand and left hand holding a straight long weapon. All these paintings are drawn with white pigment (Fig. 4.34.3a-4.34.3b).

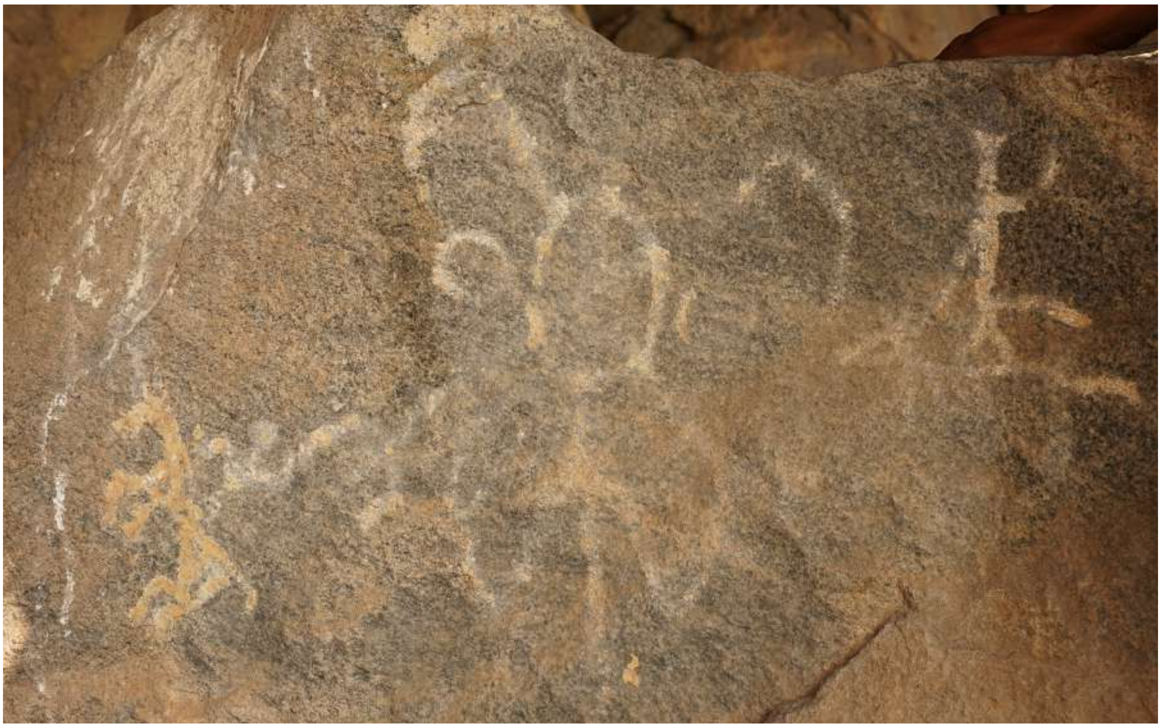


Fig. 4.34.3a Floral design and two animal riders

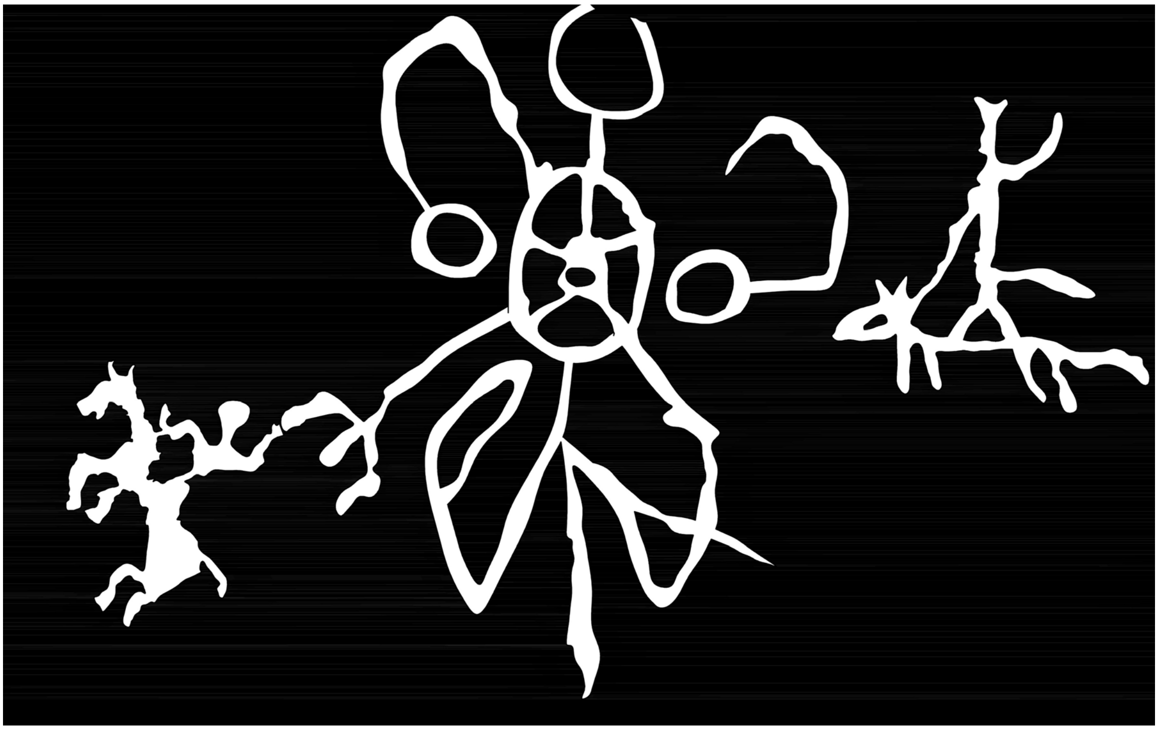


Fig. 4.34.3b Floral design and two animal riders

The man is riding a horse. The human figure is depicted with wide body and holding a rope of horse in right hand and left hand holds a long weapon (Fig. 4.34.4a-4.34.4b).

Horse rider is depicted. The human figure is shown holding a rope in one hand and a weapon in the other. A sheath for the weapon is seen at the waist (Fig. 4.34.5a-4.34.5b).

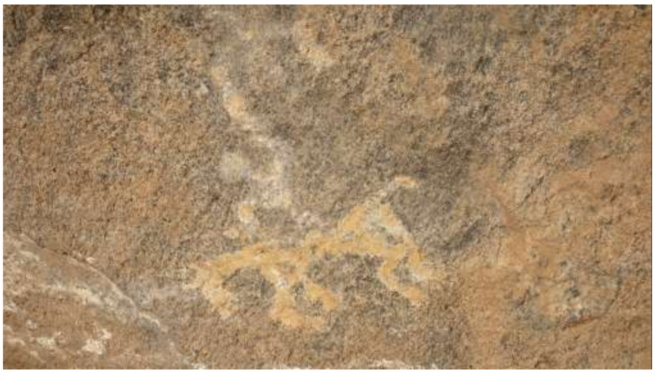


Fig. 4.34.4a Animal rider

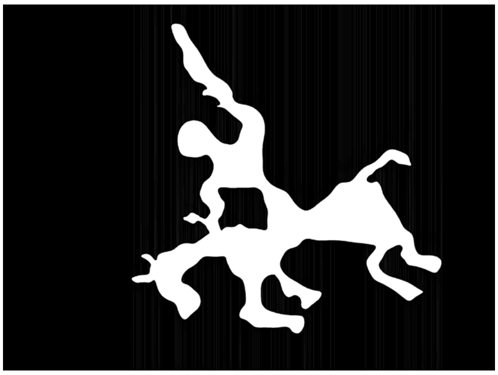


Fig. 4.34.4b Animal rider

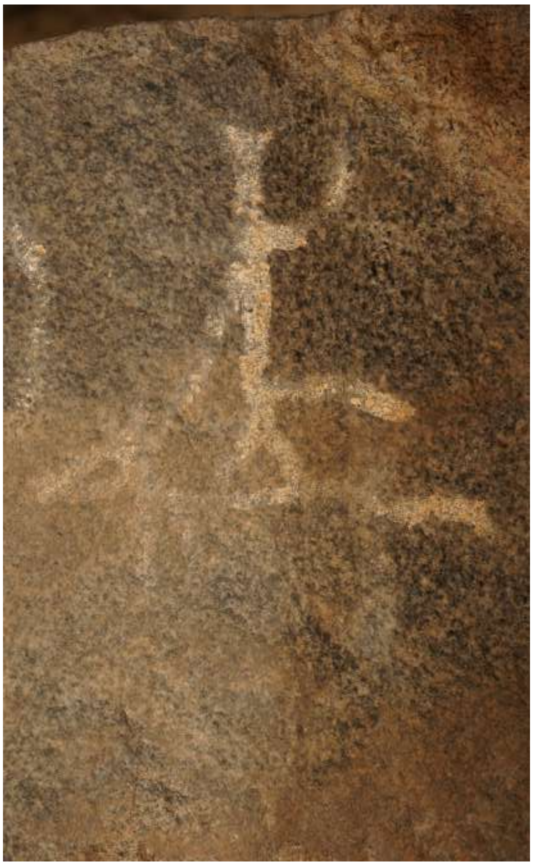


Fig. 4.34.5a Animal rider

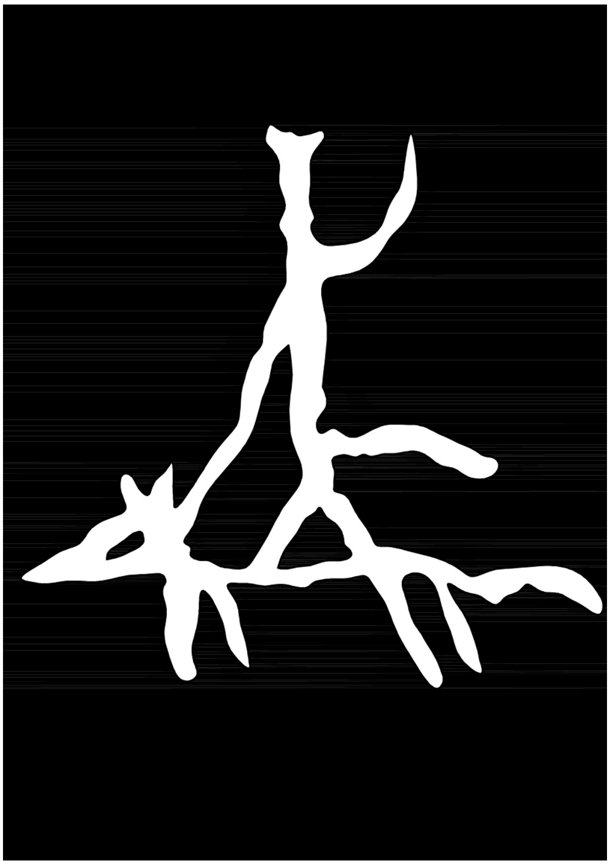
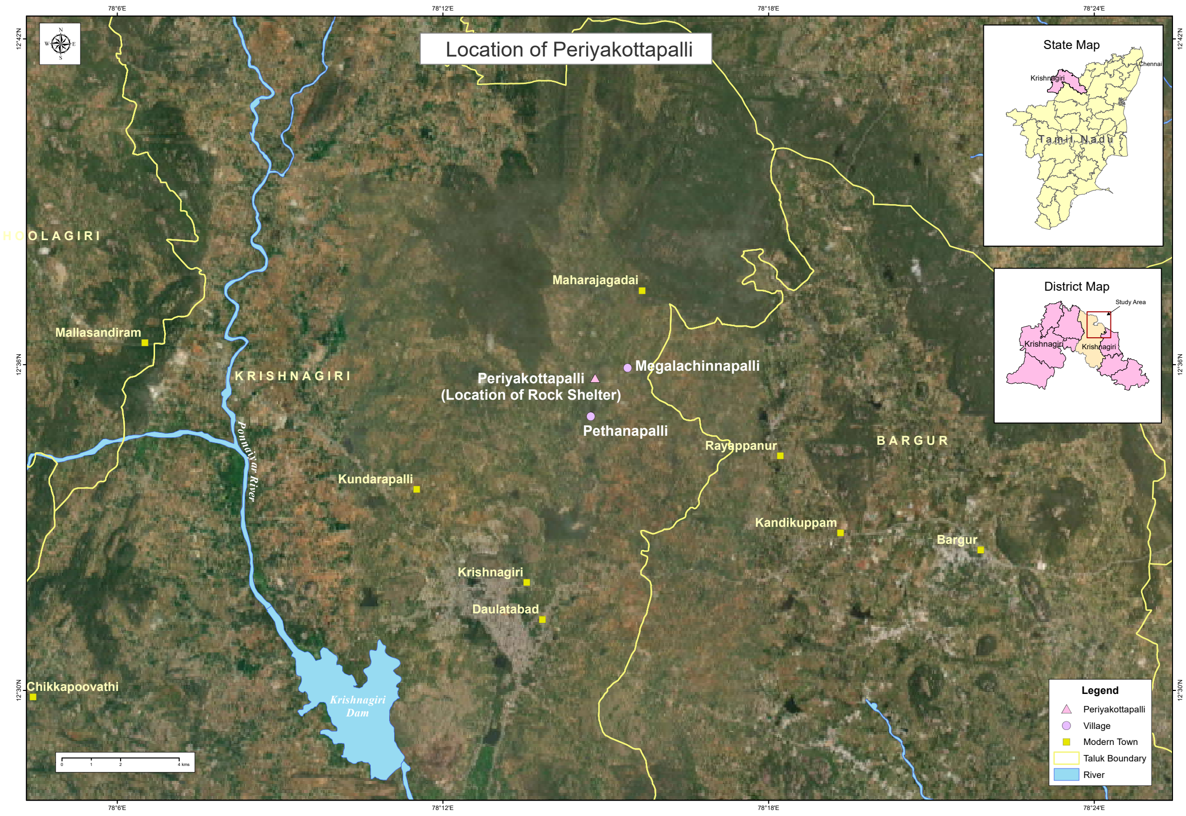


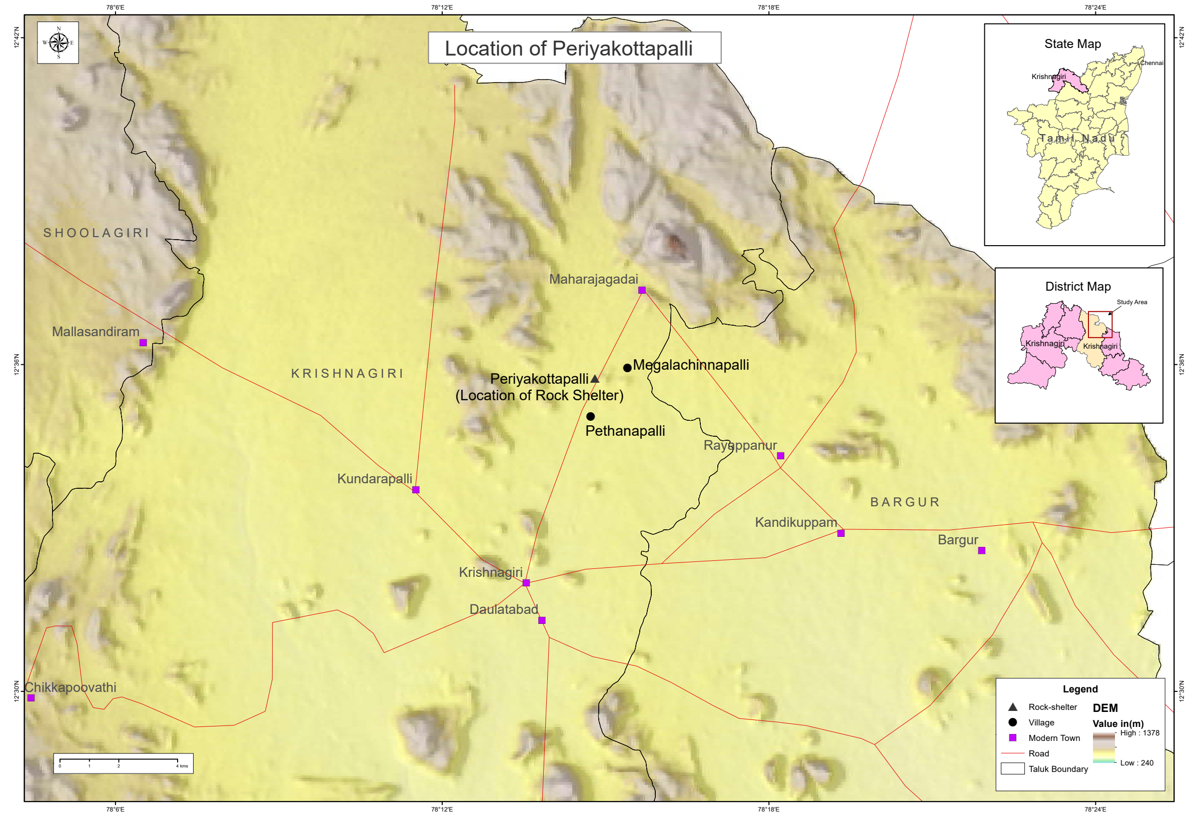
Fig. 4.34.5b Animal rider

4.35. Periyakottapalli

The village Periyakottapalli (12.59578 N; 78.24671E) is located at a distance of 13 km to the north of Krishnagiri on the Krishnagiri - Kuppam road and its also known as Pethanapalli (Map 4.35.1-4.35.2). About 1 km north-west of the village, a large hill is located, locally called as Kathirappanmalai. The hill has rock shelters on the top, as well as along the slopes. The painted rock shelter is located on the eastern side of the slope (Fig. 4.35.1-4.35.2).


Location of Periyakottapalli
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Krishnagiri
HOOLAGIRI
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Maharajagadai
Mallasandiram
Periyakottapalli
(Location of Rock Shelter)
Megalachinnapalli
Pethanapalli
Rayappanur
Kundarapalli
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Chikkapoovathi
Krishnagiri Dam
Ponnaiyar River
Legend
Periyakottapalli
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.35.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Periyakottapalli
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Krishnagiri
SHOOLAGIRI
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Maharajagadai
Mallasandiram
Periyakottapalli
(Location of Rock Shelter)
Megalachinnapalli
Pethanapalli
Rayappanur
Kundarapalli
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Chikkapoovathi
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.35.2 Location of the rock shelter

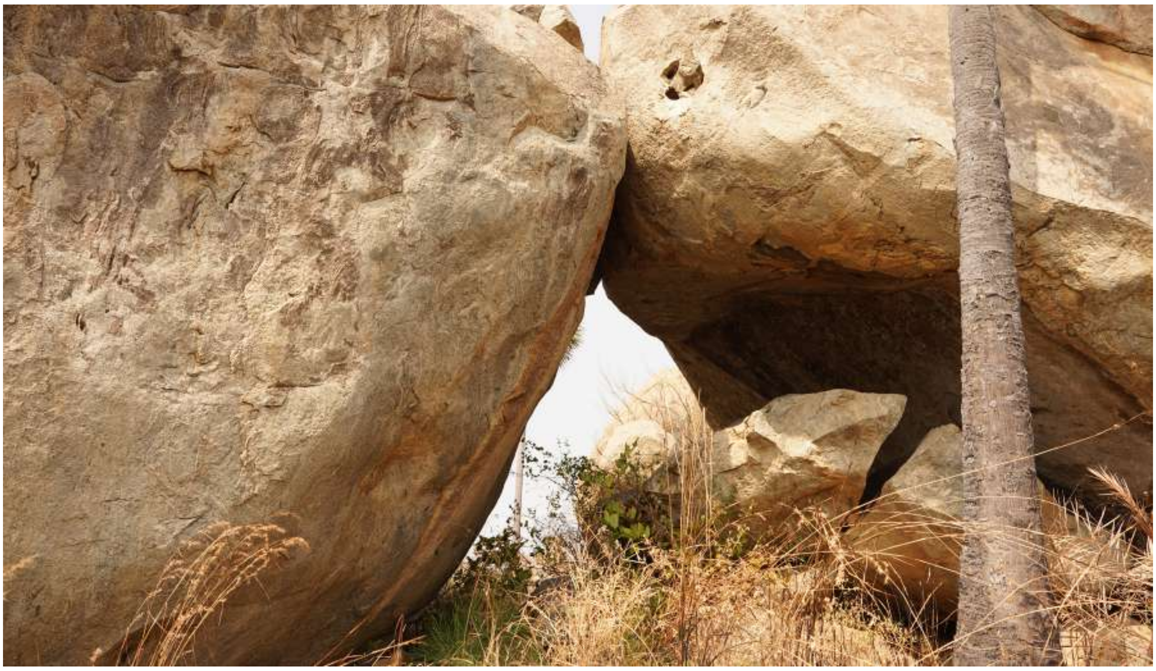


Fig. 4.35.1 General view of the rock shelter

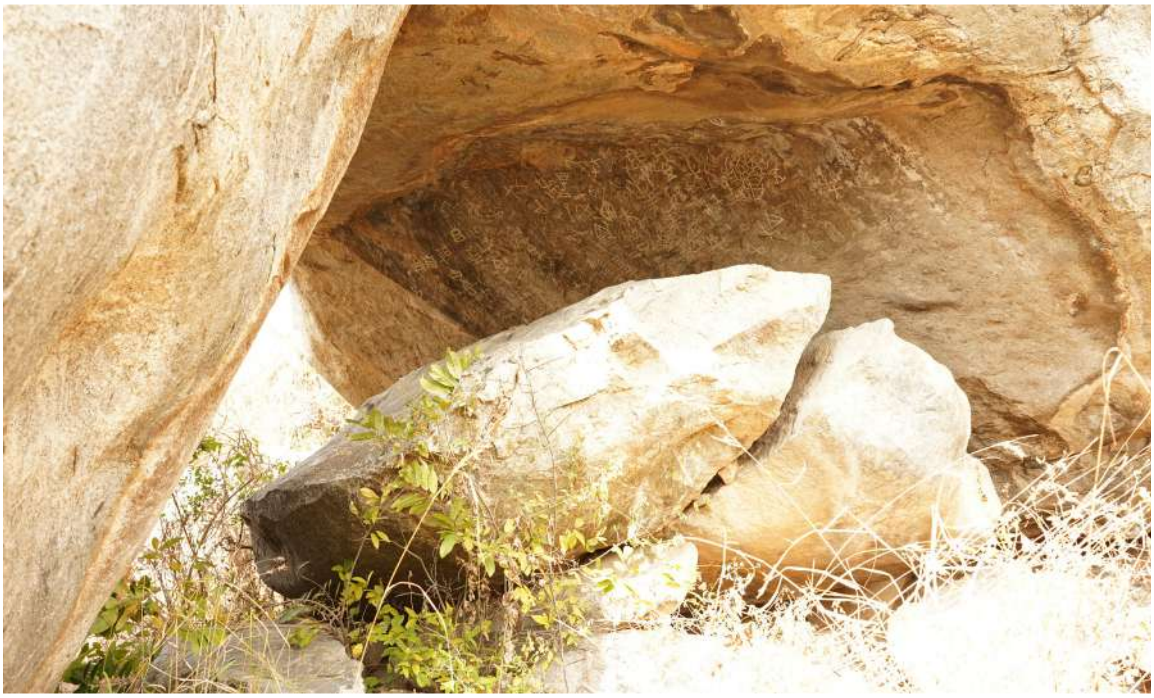


Fig. 4.35.2 General view of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 3.50 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 5.50 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 2.70 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2 m. The total painted area is 3.50x2.70 m. The documentation was carried out from left to right.

Description

There are more than 200 motifs painted in white on the rock boulder behind the village of Periyakottapalli. These are mostly line drawings. Human figures, animal figures and many symbols are drawn here. The paintings here may have been created by people living in different eras. In a few places, paintings overlap with new paintings. Some specific symbols are found in different places. Symbols like square, rectangle, triangle and other shapes are found in many places. There are also a large number of symbols made with two triangles, which are used to construct the human figures, trees and other symbols.

The human figures depicted here are shown in different positions with outstretched arms and walking posture. These paintings are created to record different events of different people. Some of these human figures are drawn in dancing positions. In some places, it is seen that humans are riding on animals. A decorative vessel-like a sacred symbol is found all over Krishnagiri and the same is also found here. On the whole, it is assumed that some scenes are centred on the theme of festivals. Although there is less chance of considering the paintings as ancient ones, but the tradition and ideas percolated into the later days too. The whole scene expresses the artistic view of the artists. The images represented in the rock shelter consist of human, damaru, triangle and antenna like sign, wheel and leaf like signs, human with head-cap, triangle, fish, geometrical sign, double wheel, "X" like signs and sun.

Panel Description

Totally 8 paintings are depicted in this panel. Those are human figures, signs, symbols and geometric patterns. The right side of the panel depict a single human figure with its head facing right and the human is in a walking/ moving position towards the right. The left leg is placed in the front and the right one is behind. Two hands are also drawn in a moving position. It's moving front and back and the head

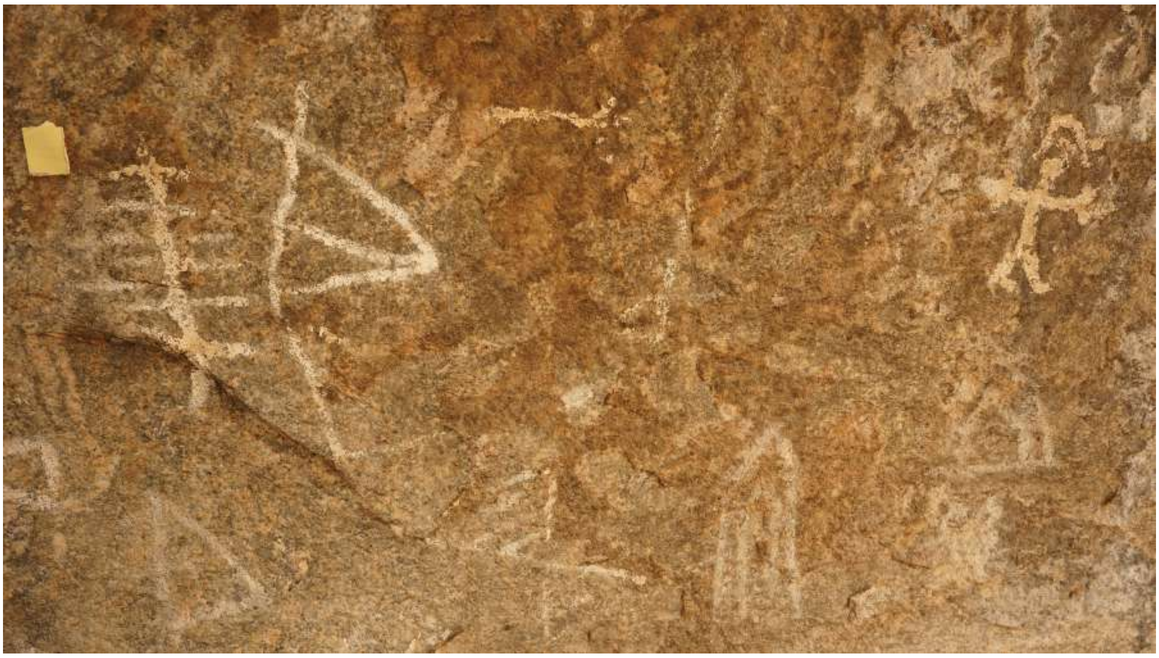


Fig. 4.35.3a Human, damaru, triangle and antenna like sign

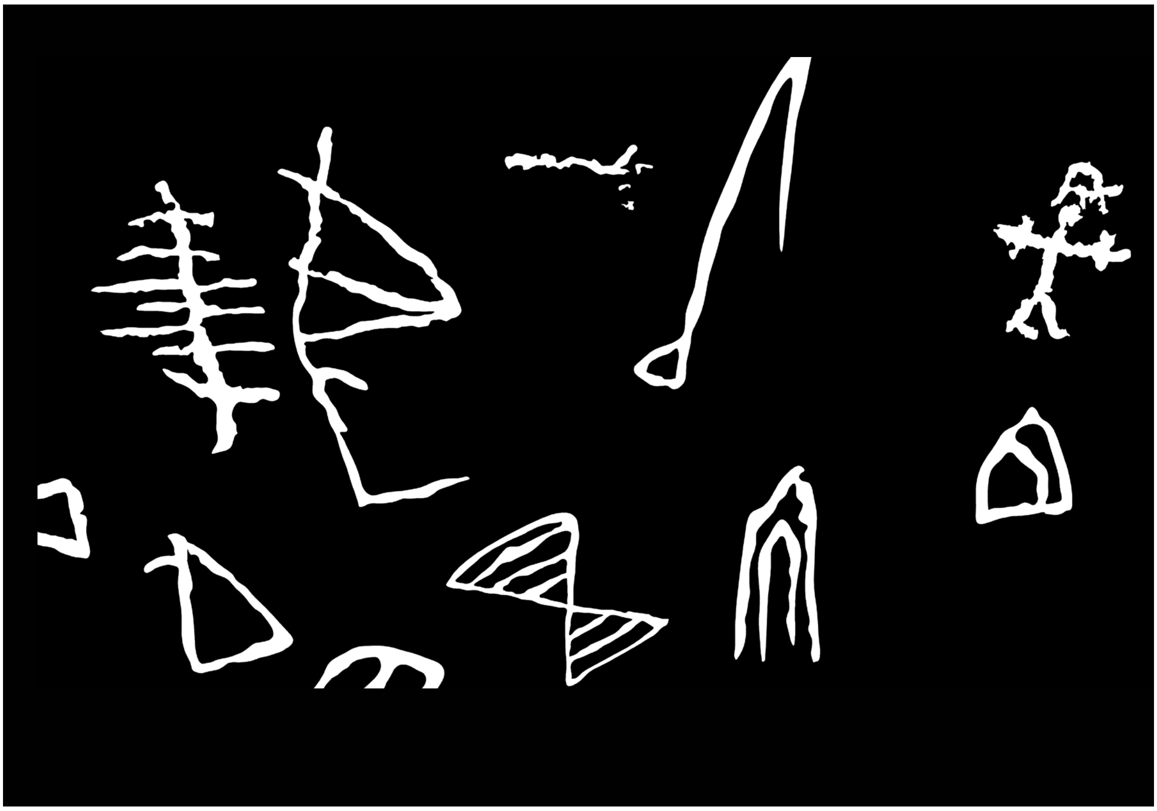


Fig. 4.35.3b Human, damaru, triangle and antenna like sign

is drawn with a headgear. Other paintings include a triangle shape and a third comb-shaped figures. Next to it on the eastern side there are signs in a slanting position filled with multiple horizontal lines. Three triangle-shaped signs with some lines were depicted to look like a Brahmi 'ma'. One tree shape is drawn with a straight line and many (7) horizontal lines are shown. All these paintings are done with a white pigment (Fig. 4.35.3a-4.35.3b).

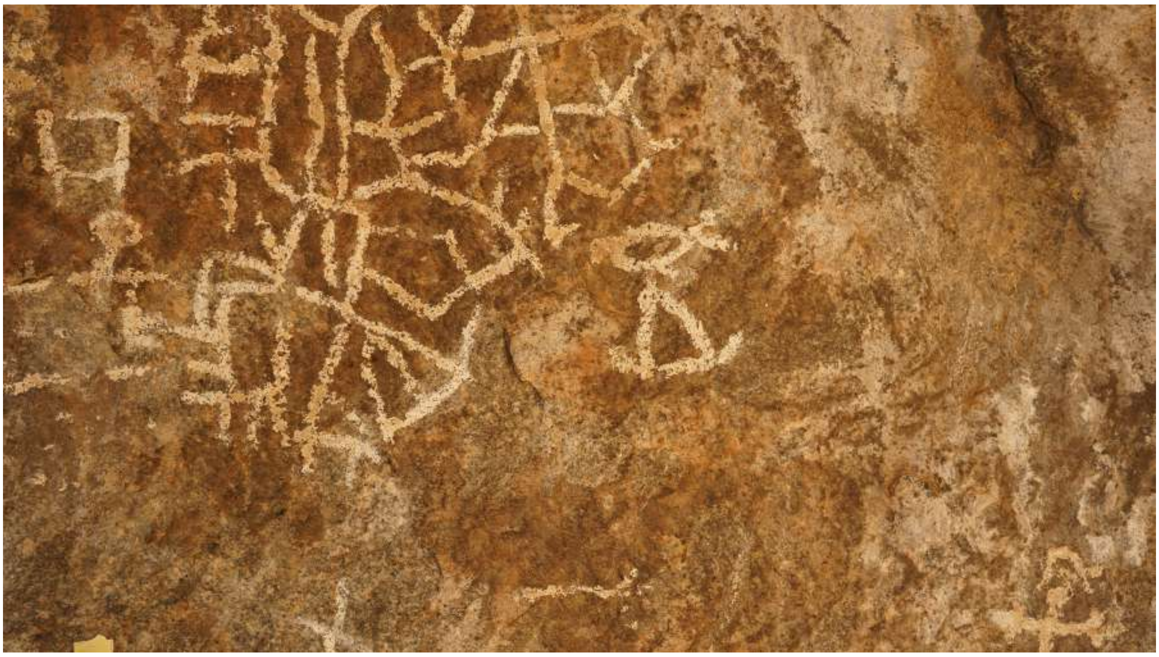


Fig. 4.35.4a Spider web

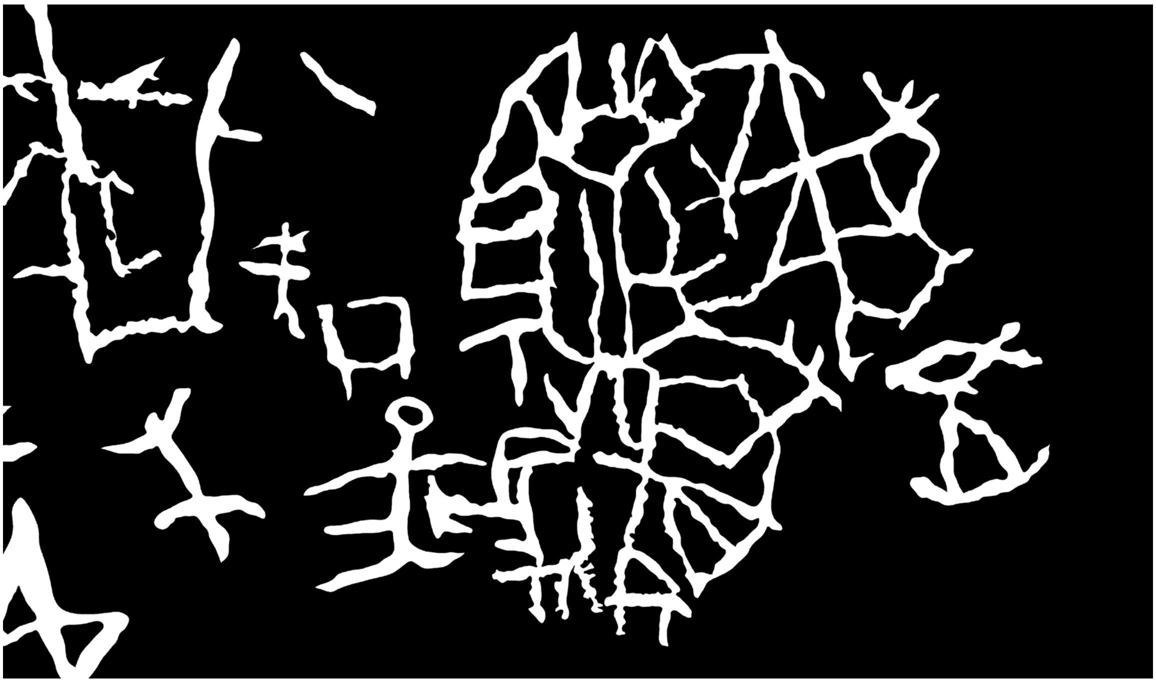


Fig. 4.35.4b Spider web

This panel is drawn with multiple lines consisting of straight lines, geometric patterns and other signs. Many boxes are formed looking like a spider web (Fig. 4.35.4a-4.35.4b).

In this panel, three paintings are drawn with white pigment. The human figure is depicted in a walking/ moving position and it might be a fighting pose. Simple lines were used to draw this figure and hands are raised up in right-left direction. The head is drawn with a projection. The second image is a tree with leaves, straight line with many crossed lines indicating leaf. Third, geometric figure of a circle with four crossed lines on inner side, like a plus symbol (Fig. 4.35.5a-4.35.5b).

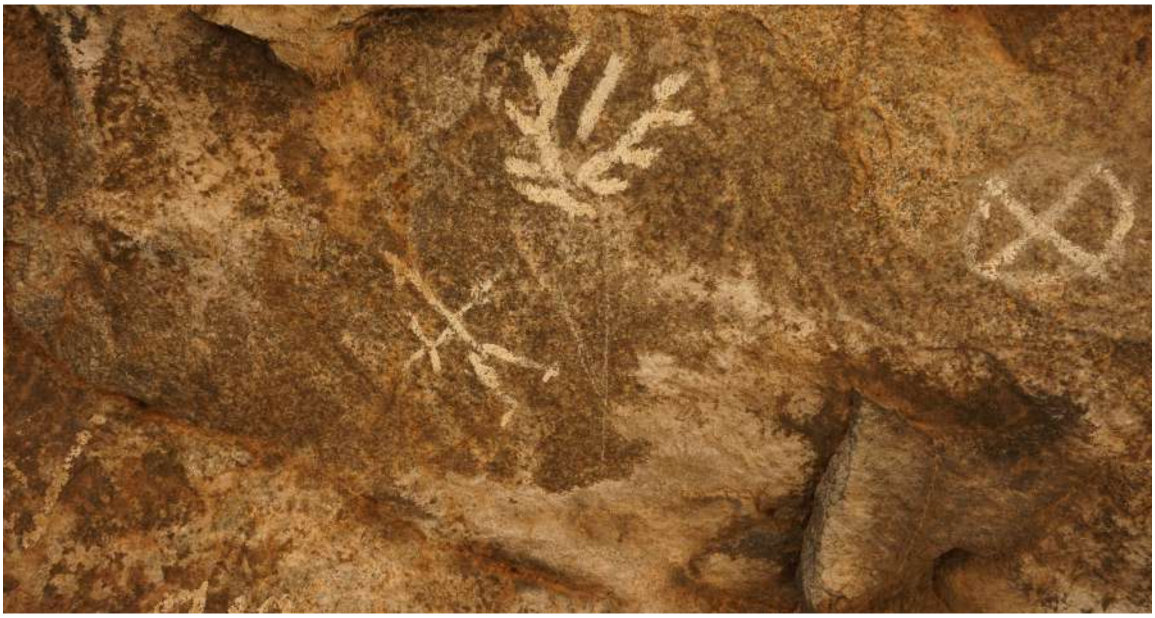


Fig. 4.35.5a Human, wheel and leaf like signs

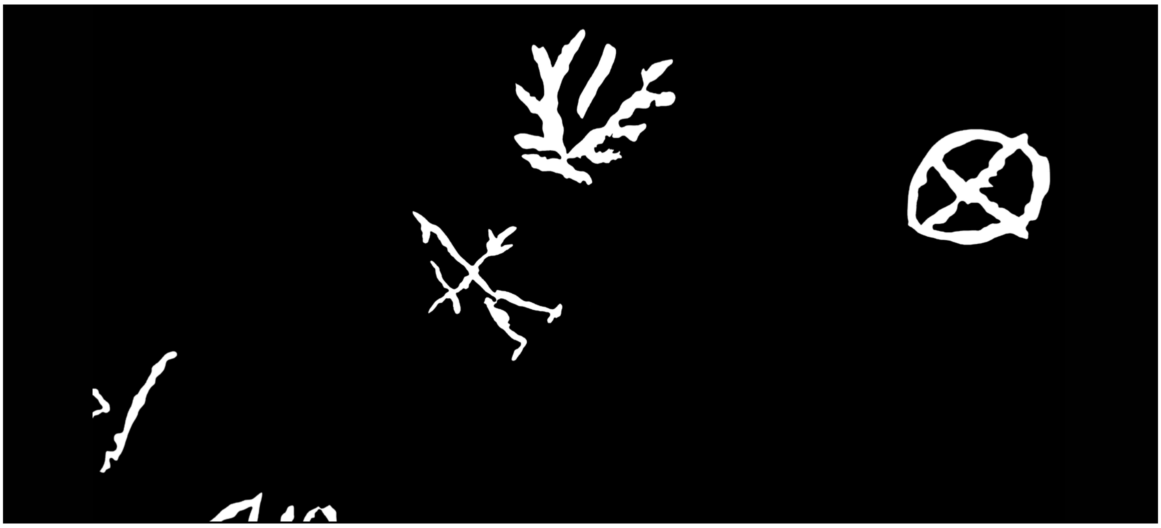


Fig. 4.35.5b *Human, wheel and leaf like signs*

Two images are depicted in this panel, which are a tree and triangle-shaped geometric signs. First, the tree painting is drawn with a single straight line and several crossed lines from top to bottom. Second is a geometric symbol, which is in triangle shape and the one line crosses from the right corner towards the left and another line is extending downwards from the left corner (Fig. 4.35.6a-4.35.6b).

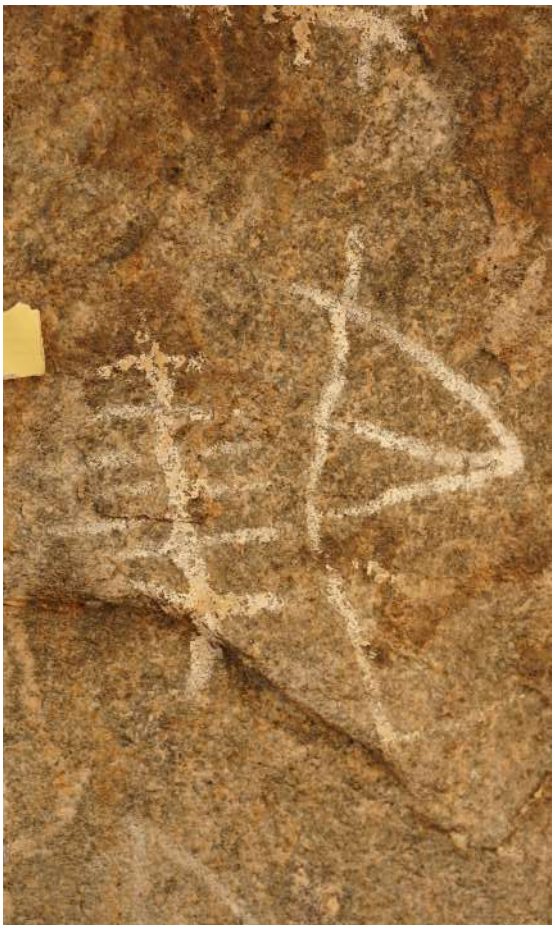


Fig. 4.35.6a *Antenna like sign*

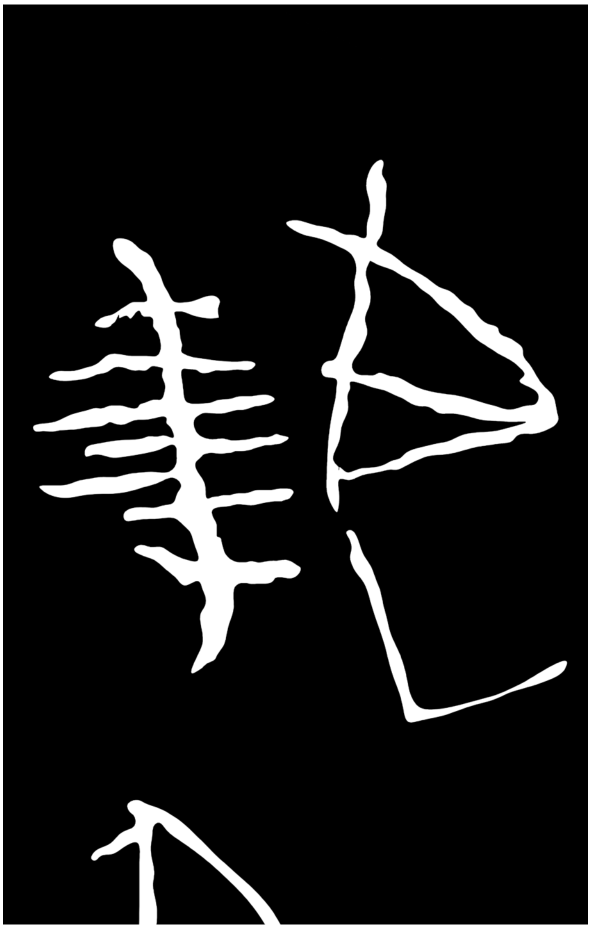


Fig. 4.35.6b *Antenna like sign*

In this panel, straight, circle, square and octagonal lines are used to make a spider web like design (Fig. 4.35.7a-4.35.7b).

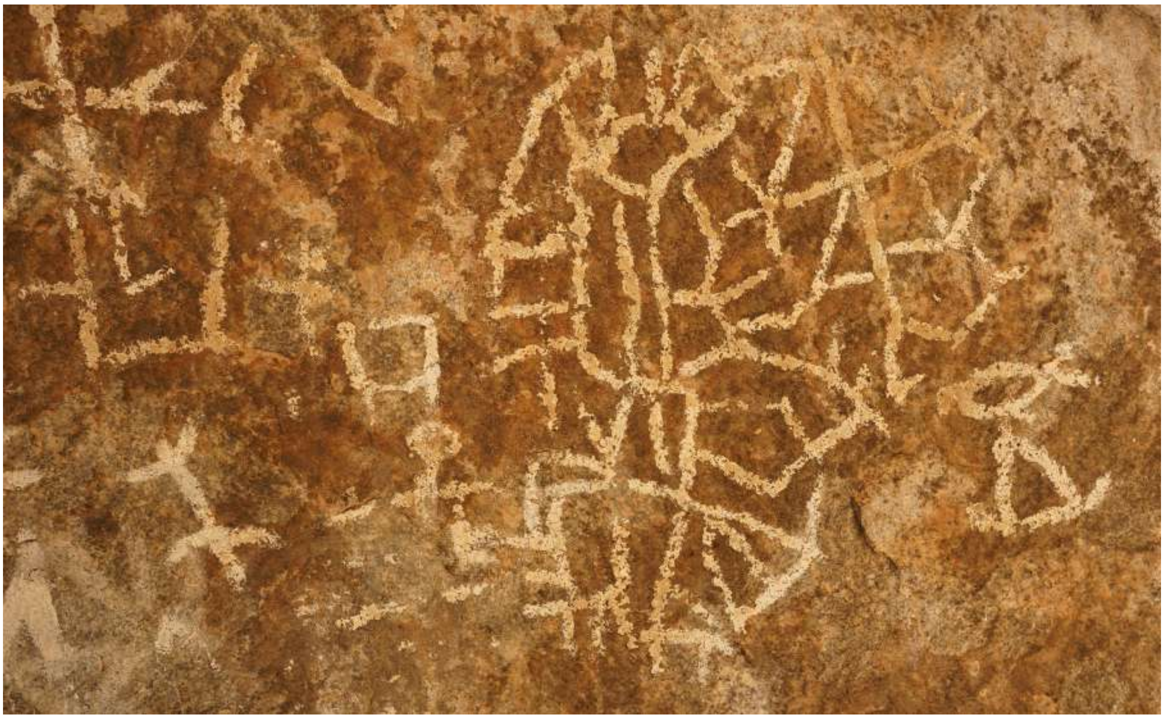


Fig. 4.35.7a Humans

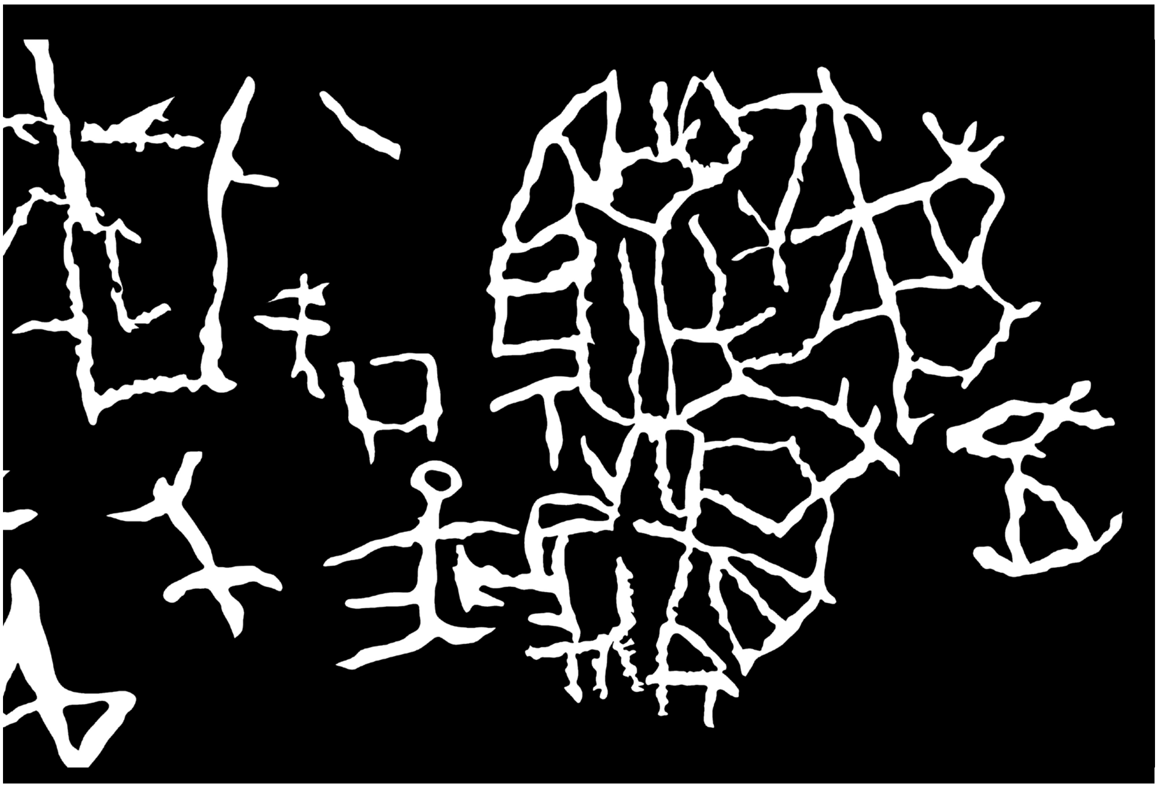


Fig. 4.35.7b Humans

Two images are depicted in this panel. One human figure and a tree symbol/sign and both are made of white pigments. The human figure is drawn with simple line (Fig. 4.35.8a-4.35.8b).

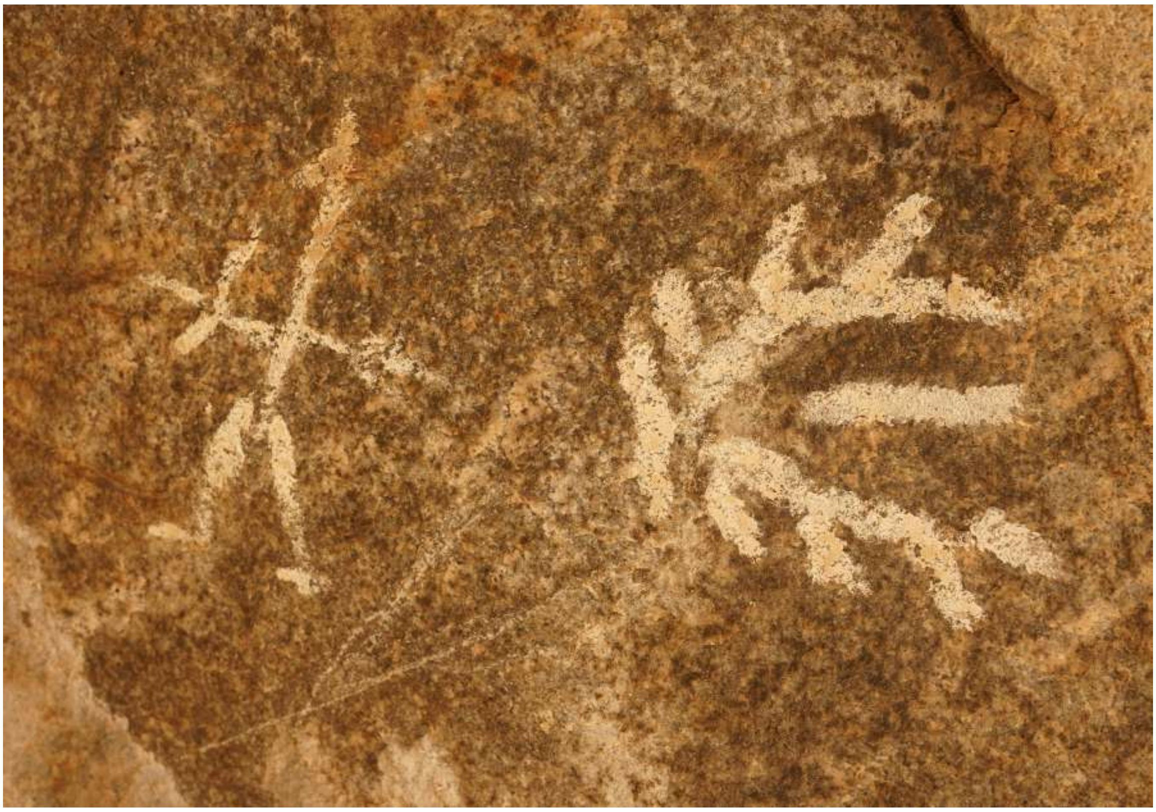


Fig. 4.35.8a Human and leaf like signs

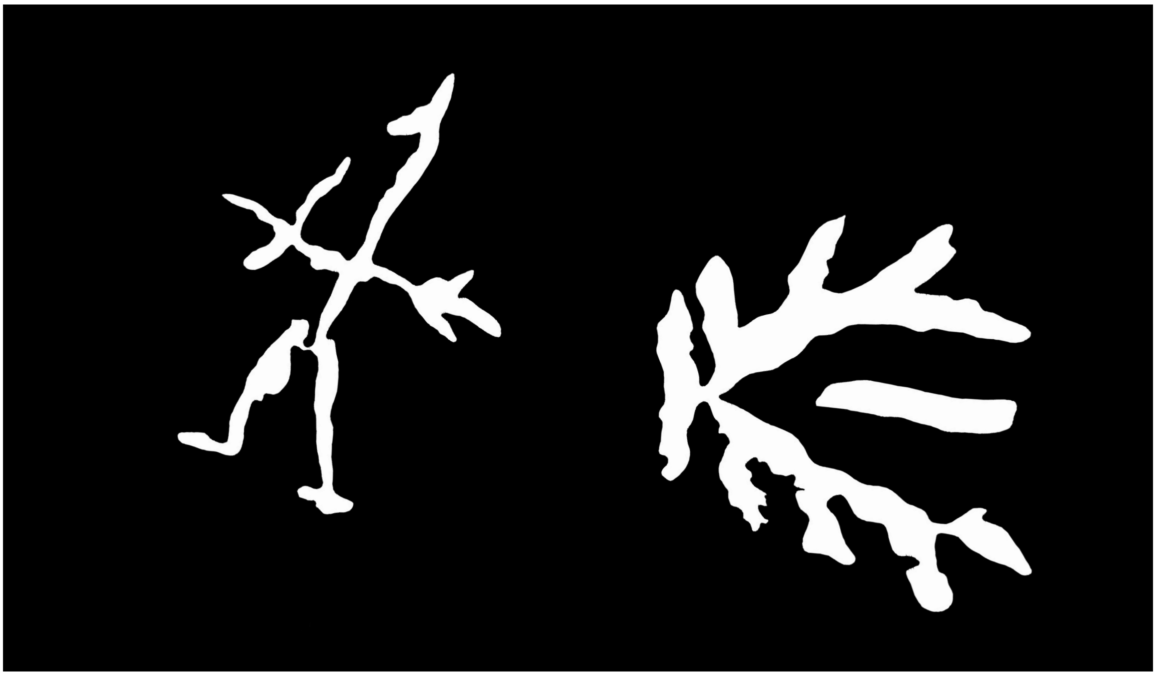


Fig. 4.35.8b Human and leaf like signs

This picture is a geometric symbol of a circle/wheel with a cross at the centre making the circle divided into four equal parts. White pigment is used (Fig. 4.35.9a-4.35.9b).

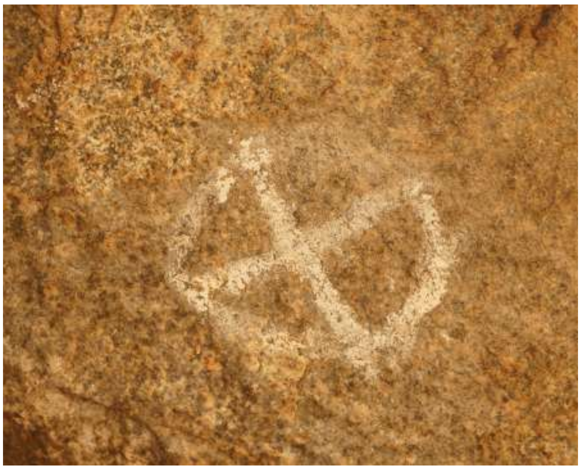


Fig. 4.35.9a Wheel

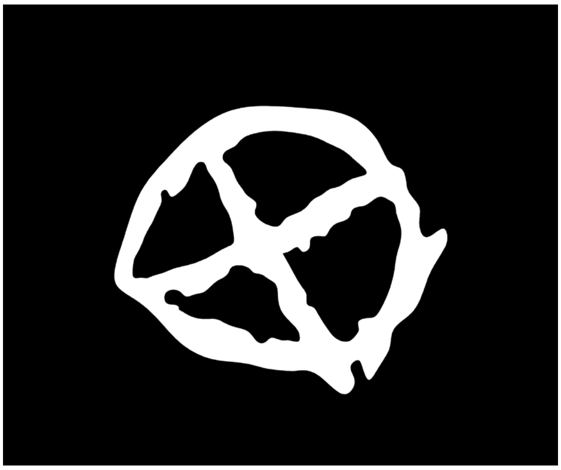


Fig. 4.35.9b Wheel

One human figure is depicted and it is made of white pigment. This figure is in a standing position by holding the legs rested on the surface. Here, it is depicted with two hands and legs, and the head is wearing a curved shaped head gear. The hands are extending both on right and left sides. It may be a hunting scene using a bow and arrow (Fig. 4.35.10a-4.35.10b).

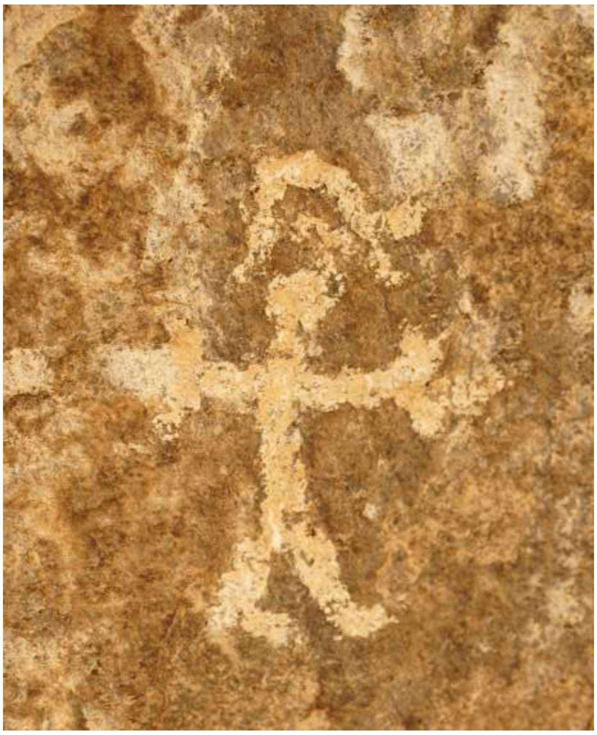


Fig. 4.35.10a Human with headcap

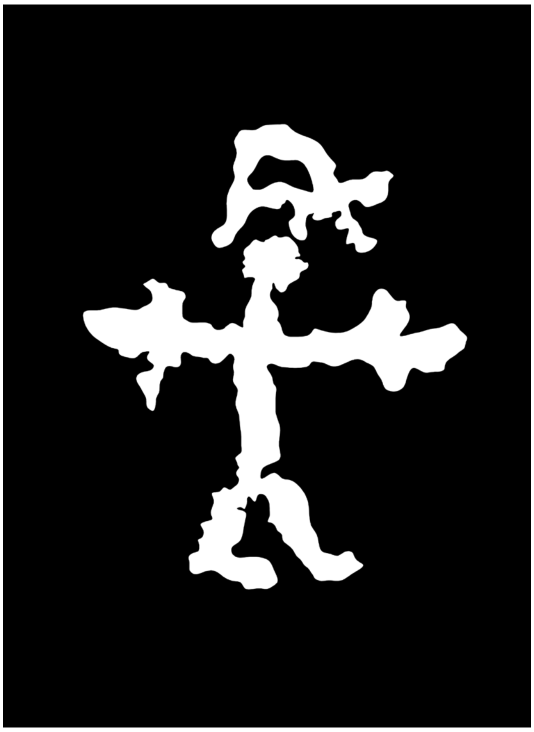


Fig. 4.35.10b Human with headcap

In this panel, a *damaru* shape filled with eight horizontal lines is depicted. Another one looks like a conch. All are drawn with white pigments (Fig. 4.35.11a-4.35.11b).

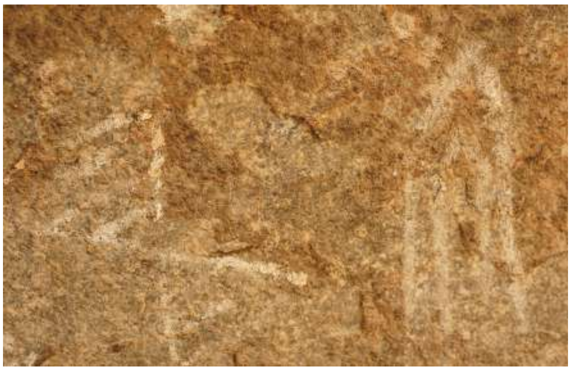


Fig. 4.35.11a "Damaru" like sign

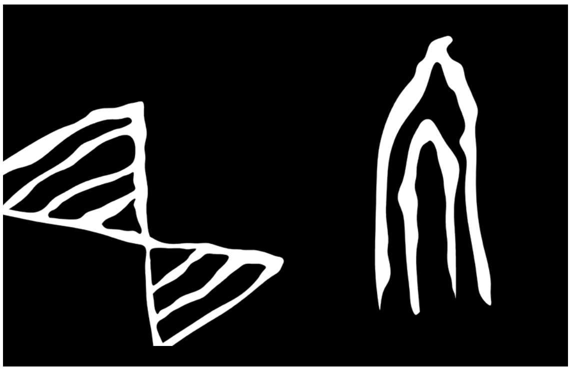


Fig. 4.35.11b "Damaru" like sign

One in triangular and a circular is drawn (Fig. 4.35.12a-4.35.12b).

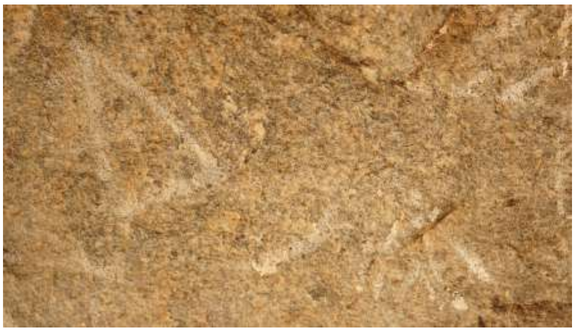


Fig. 4.35.12a Triangle

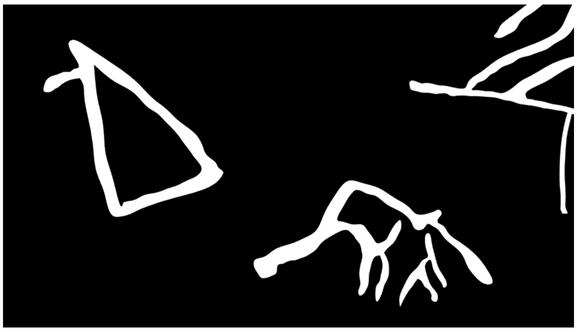


Fig. 4.35.12b Triangle

A pair of *damaru* like sign in white pigment is depicted (Fig. 4.35.13a-4.35.13b).

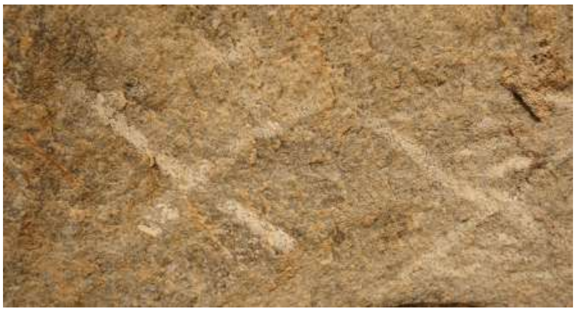


Fig. 4.35.13a Fish

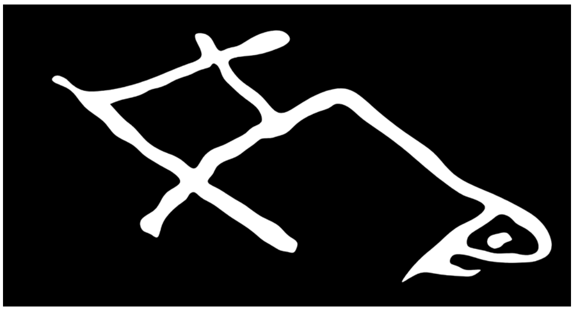


Fig. 4.35.13b Fish

An image that looks like number 8 in white pigment is placed horizontally (Fig. 4.35.14a-4.35.14b).

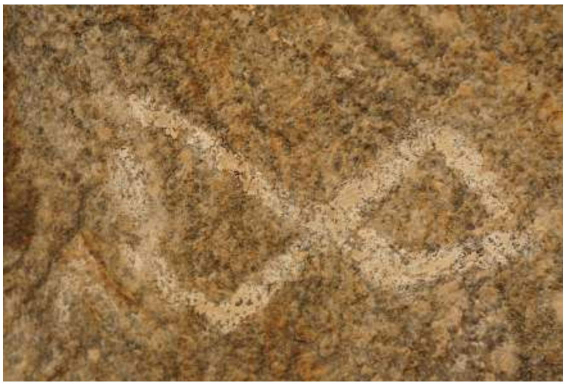


Fig. 4.35.14a "Damaru"

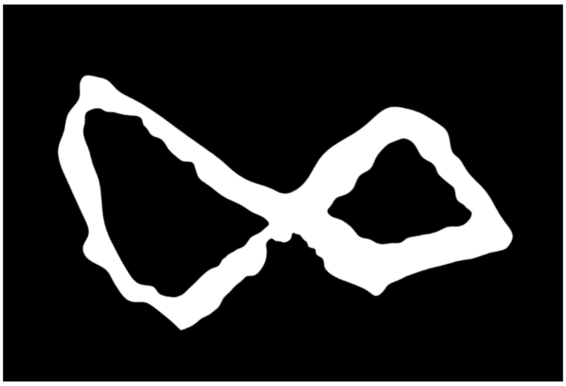


Fig. 4.35.14b "Damaru"

This panel is fully depicted with geometric and non-geometric symbols and designs. The human figure is depicted in thin lines with hands and legs. Box pictures are in rectangular and square. Eight signs are drawn at the top right corner. Many more lines are also drawn in single lines (Fig. 4.35.15a-4.35.15b).

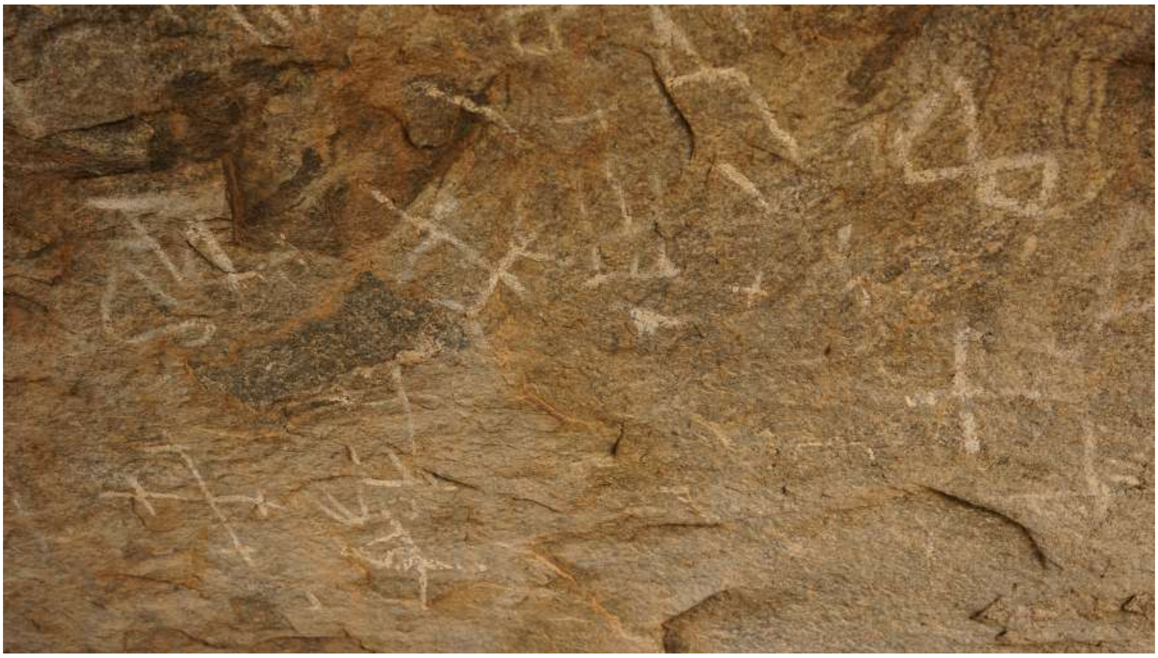


Fig. 4.35.15a Humans, fish and "damaru"

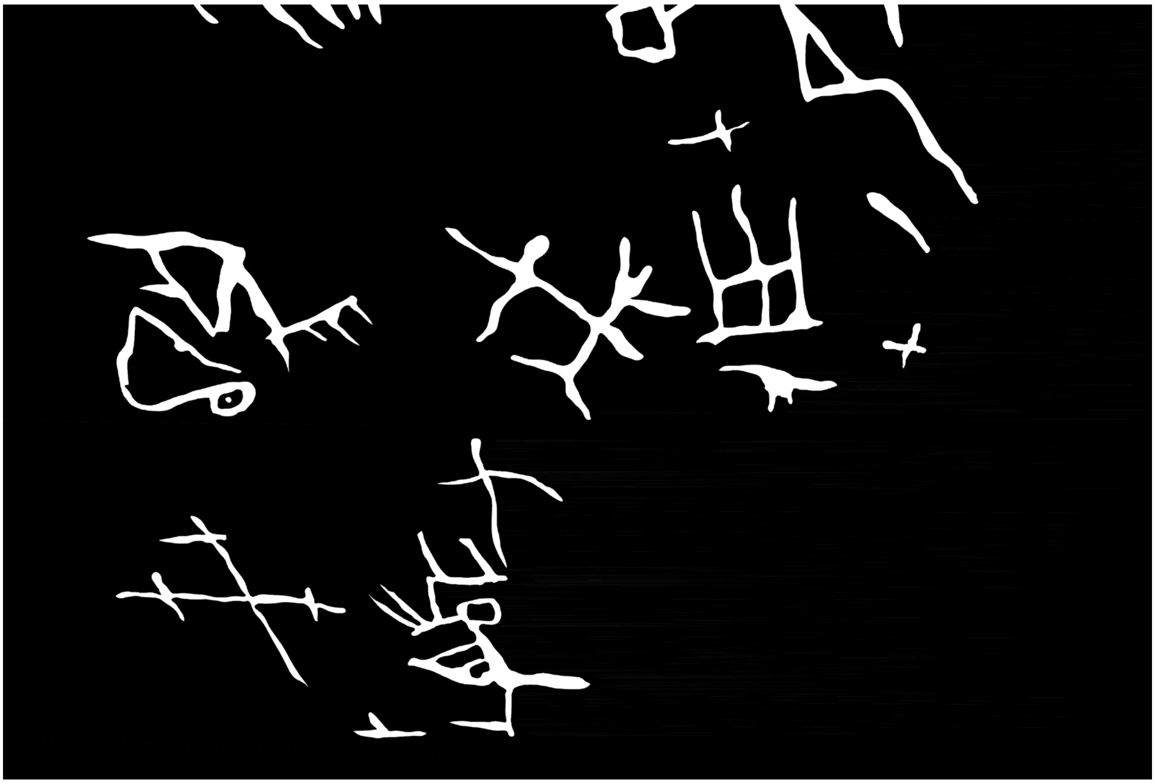


Fig. 4.35.15b Humans, fish and "damaru"

This panel of paintings is drawn with a simple line. Those are human figures holding a weapon. Simple lines are drawn in all directions both geometric and non-geometric in shape. Another one is like a tree with a cross-cut line. Many signs are drawn, but not so clear (Fig. 4.35.16a-4.35.16b).

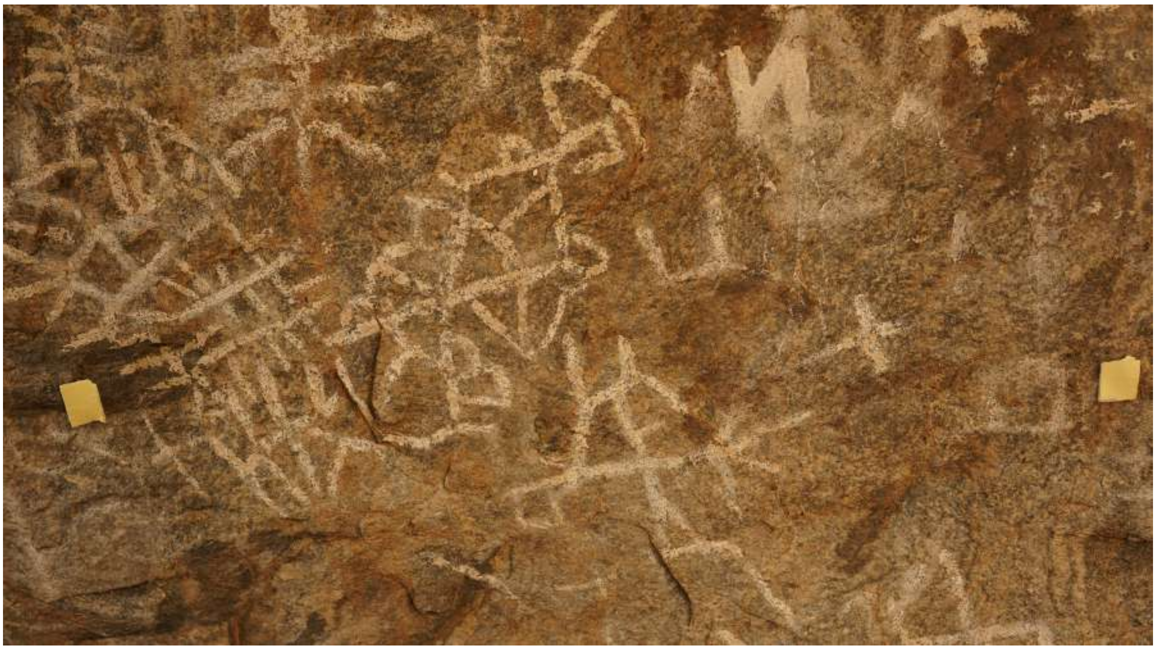


Fig. 4.35.16a Humans

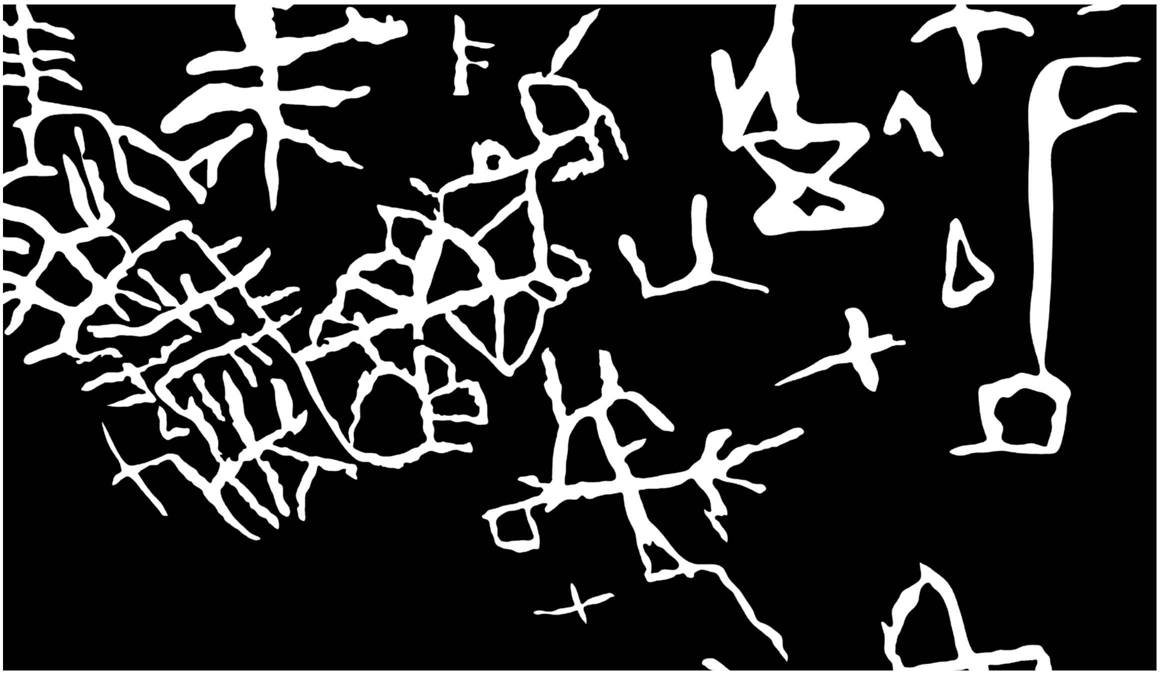


Fig. 4.35.16b Humans

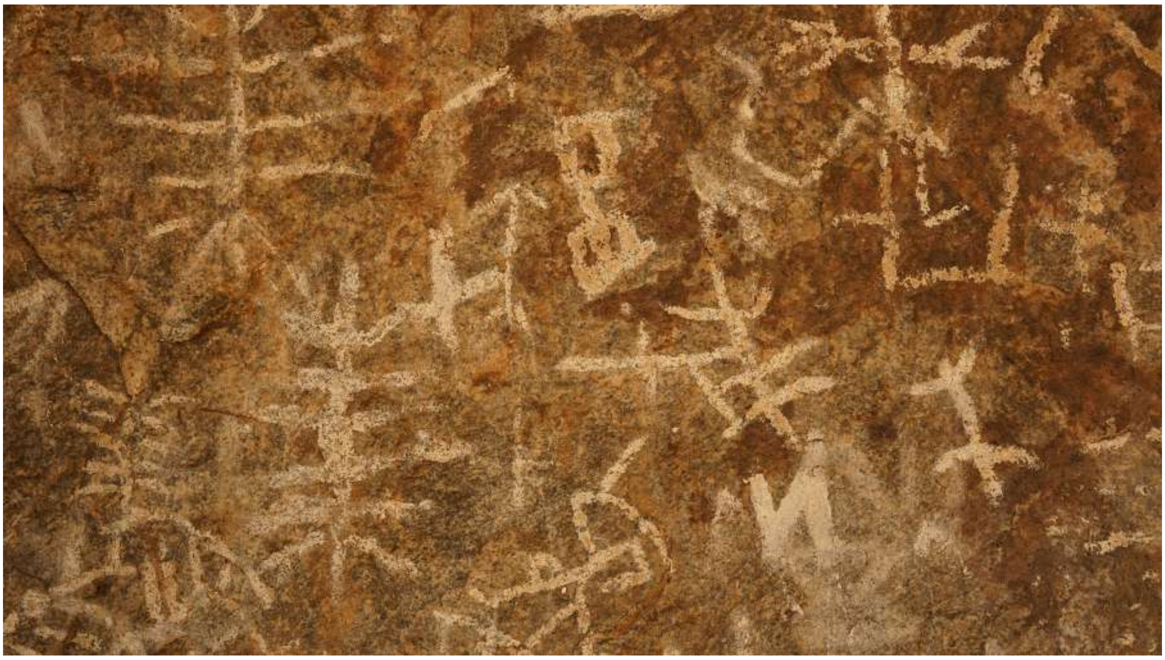


Fig. 4.35.17a Humans and antenna like sign

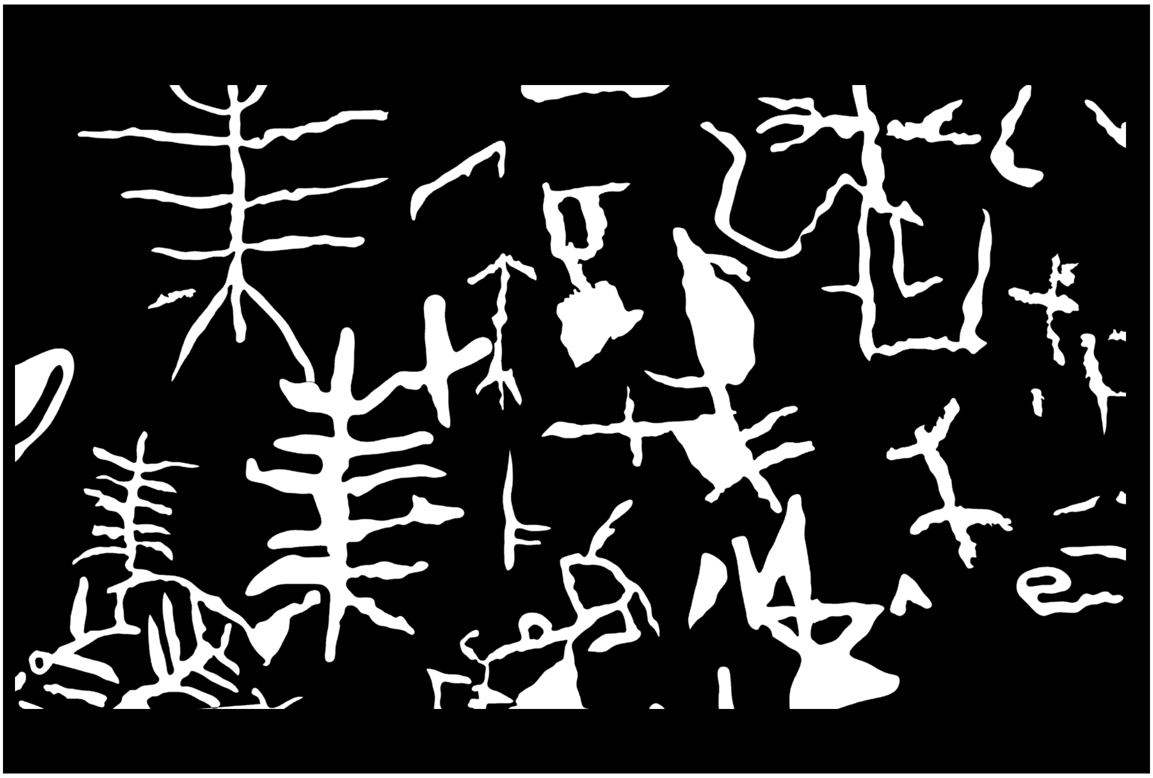


Fig. 4.35.17b Humans and antenna like sign

This panel depicts a human figure, geometric and non-geometric shapes such as squares, rectangulars, lines and circles and other designs. A few tree symbols, human and fish kind of paintings are also depicted. The entire panel is indicating that it could be a ritual activity (Fig. 4.35.17a-4.35.17b).

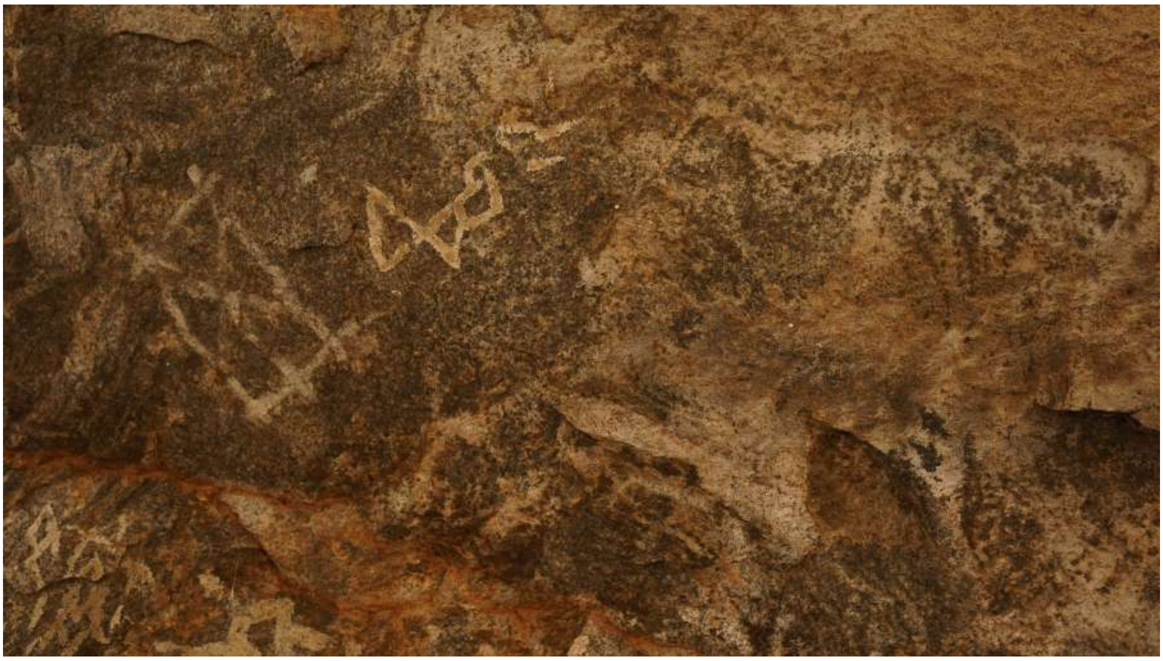


Fig. 4.35.18a Geometrical sign and "damaru"

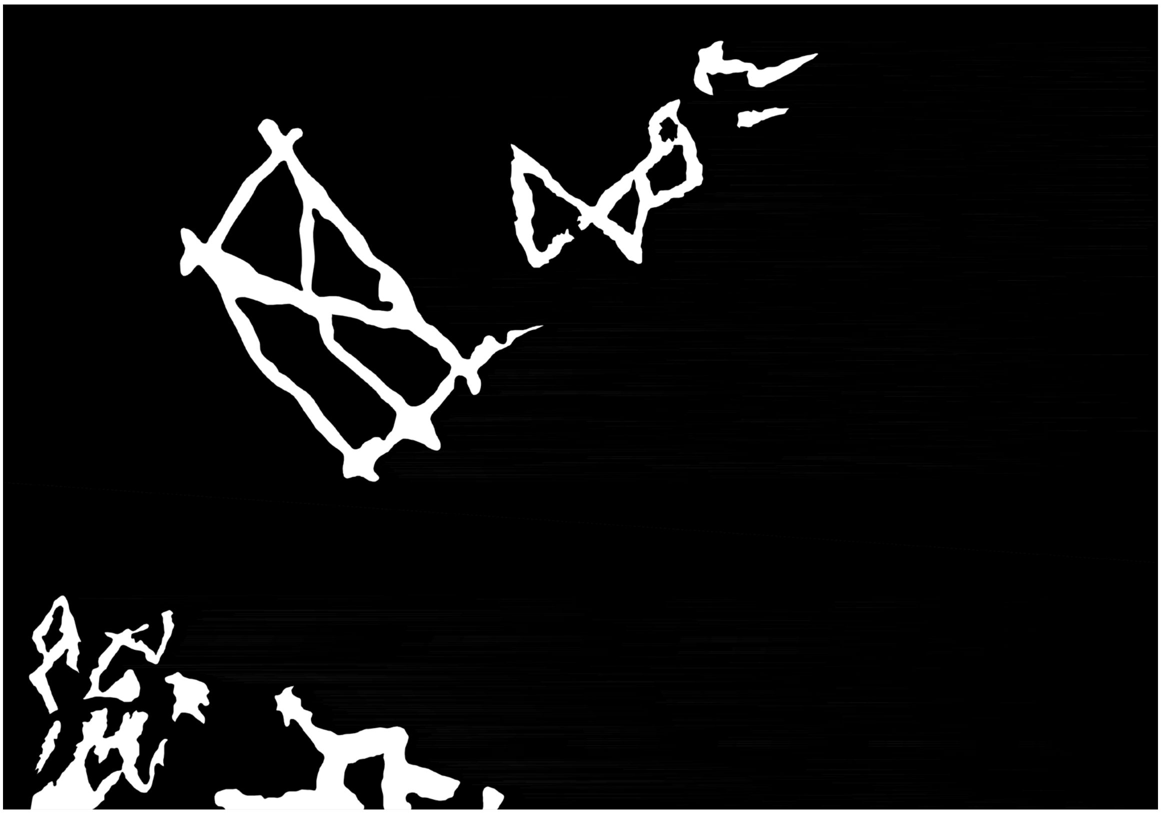


Fig. 4.35.18b Geometrical sign and "damaru"

In this panel, human images are depicted. One is a geometric and another is a damaru sign, all in white pigment (Fig. 4.35.18a-4.35.18b).

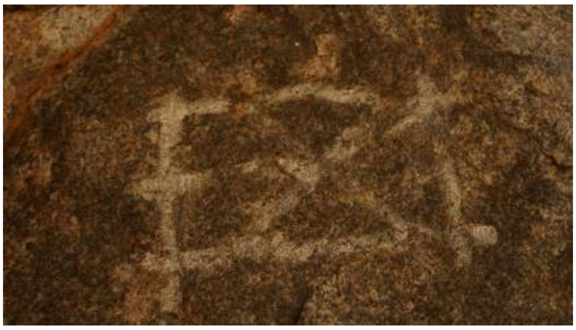


Fig. 4.35.19a Animal

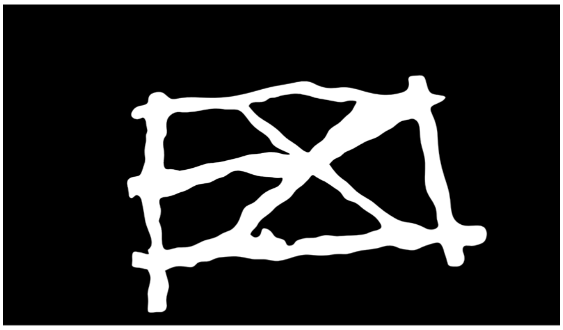


Fig. 4.35.19b Animal

This image looks like an animal in a standing position. It has four legs, a head and a tail. It is standing on some flat material. Slightly faded (Fig. 4.35.19a-4.35.19b).

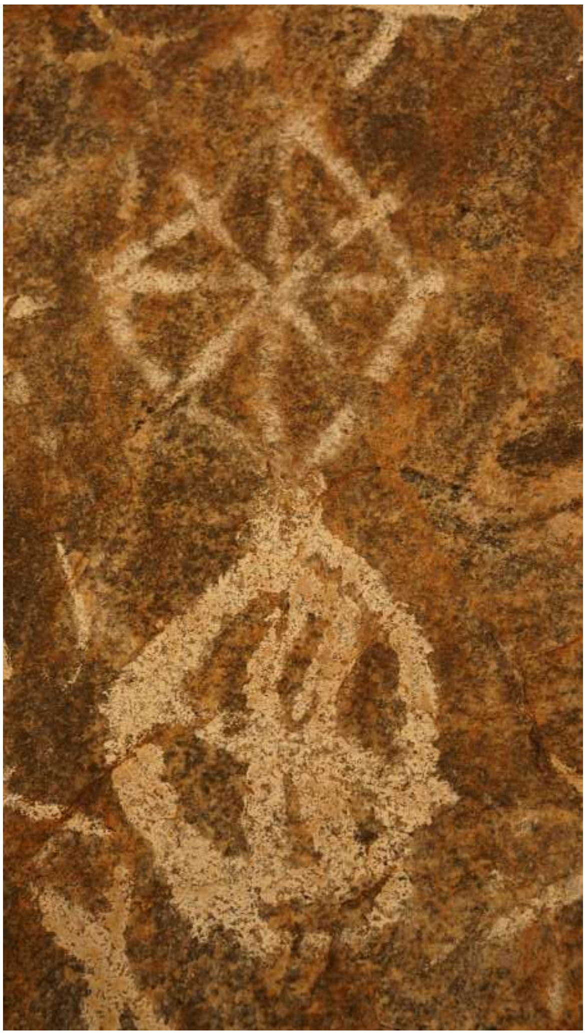


Fig. 4.35.20a Double wheel

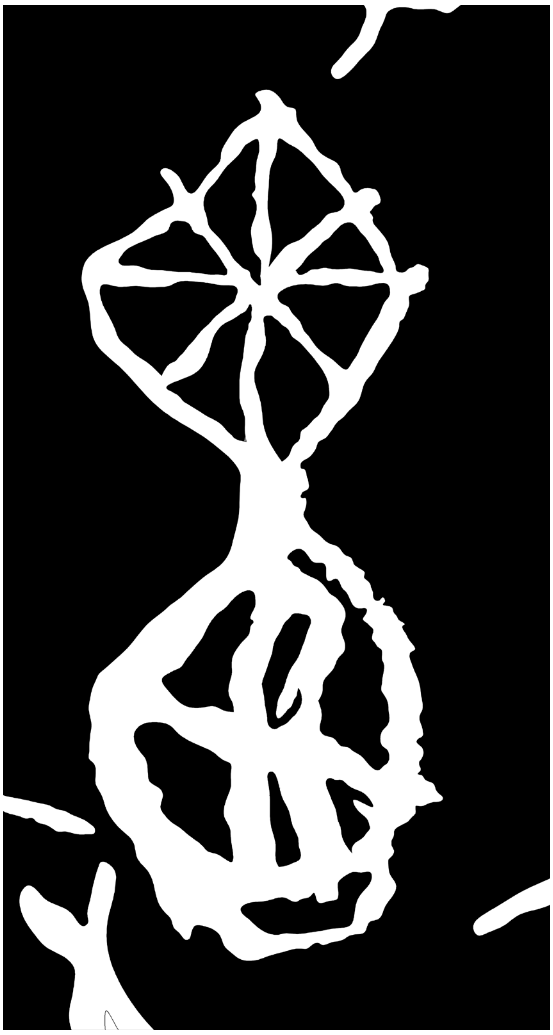


Fig. 4.35.20b Double wheel

Two wheels with spokes are drawn close to each other. It could be a wheel. One circle has eight spokes and another circle has six (Fig. 4.35.20a-4.35.20b).

Three paintings are depicted in this panel. One human figure is shown in a standing position with a missing head and big fingers in hand and legs. One leg has 5 fingers; another has 3 fingers. Two 'X' marks are painted below this human figure (Fig. 4.35.21a-4.35.21b).

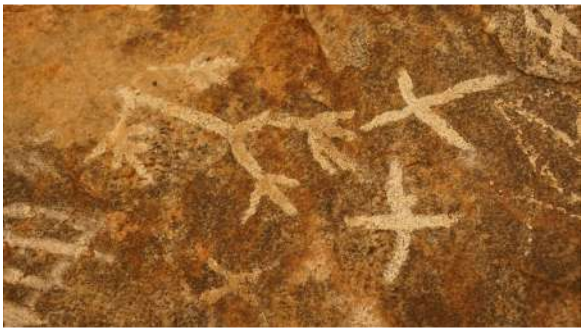


Fig. 4.35.21a Human and "X" like signs

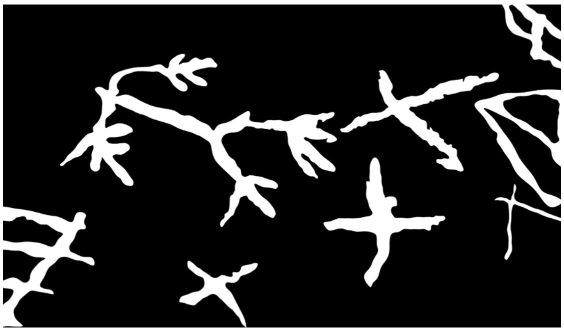


Fig. 4.35.21b Human and "X" like signs

Many geometric and non-geometric symbols are depicted. One tree symbol and two triangle-shaped symbols filled with small lines inside. All these paintings are drawn with white pigment (Fig. 4.35.22a-4.35.22b).

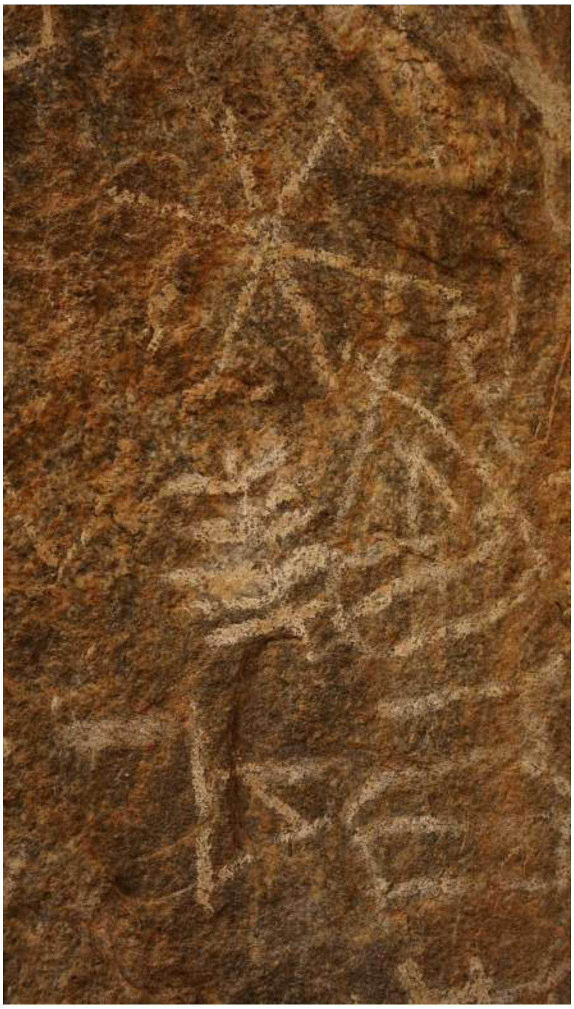


Fig. 4.35.22a Sun and antenna like signs

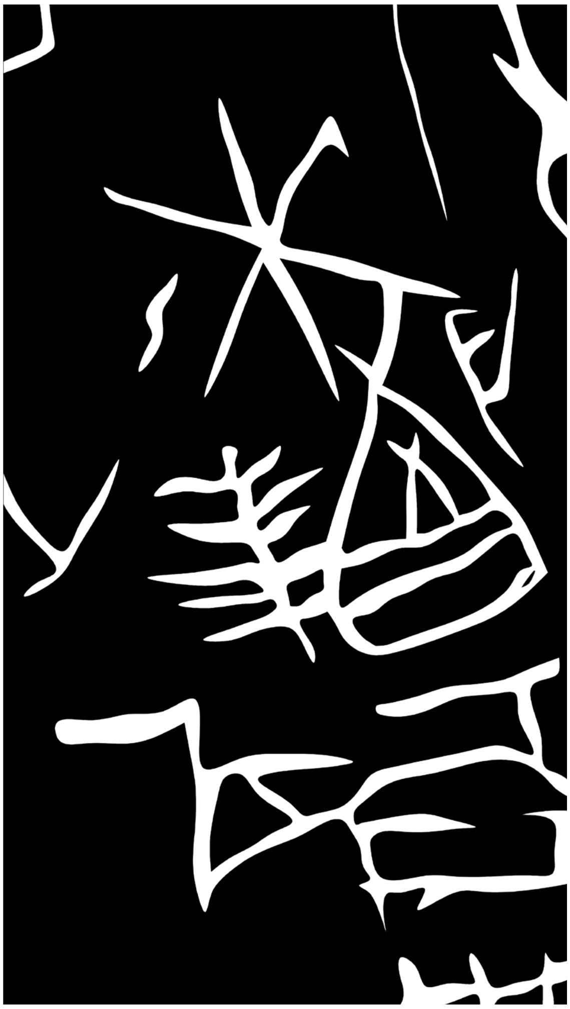


Fig. 4.35.22b Sun and antenna like signs

This panel has depictions of geometric and non-geometric symbols, including squares and rectangular-shaped boxes. Few simple lines and extended lines are depicted. Painting is drawn with white pigment (Fig. 4.35.23a-4.35.23b).

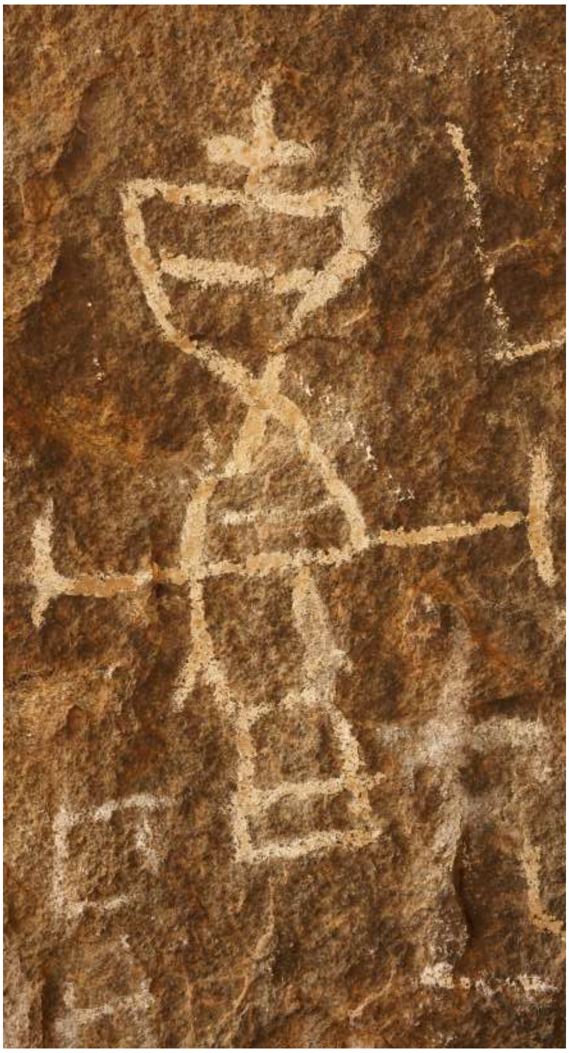


Fig. 4.35.23a Unidentified

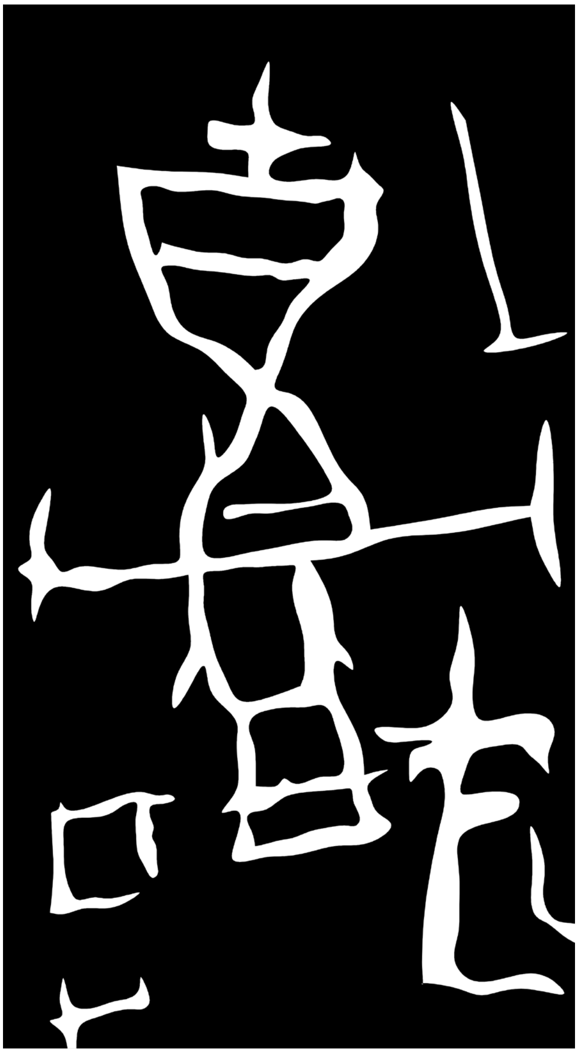


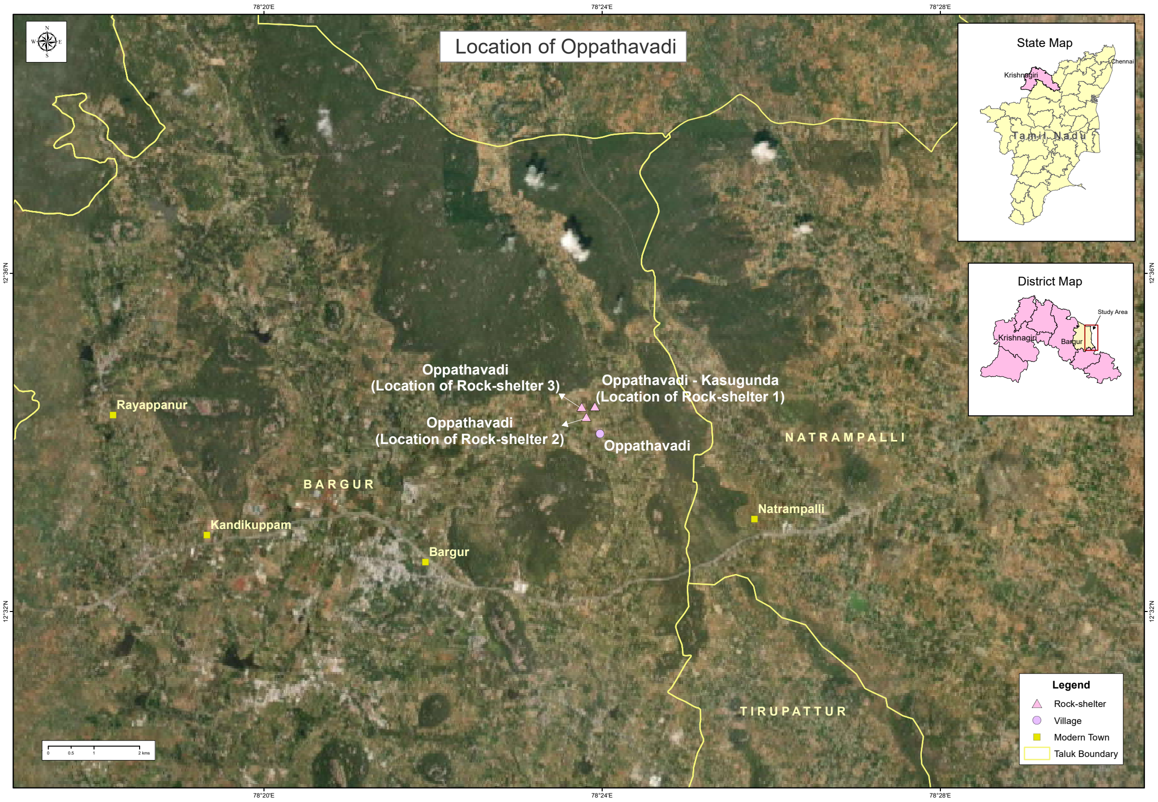
Fig. 4.35.23b Unidentified

4.36. Oppattavadi

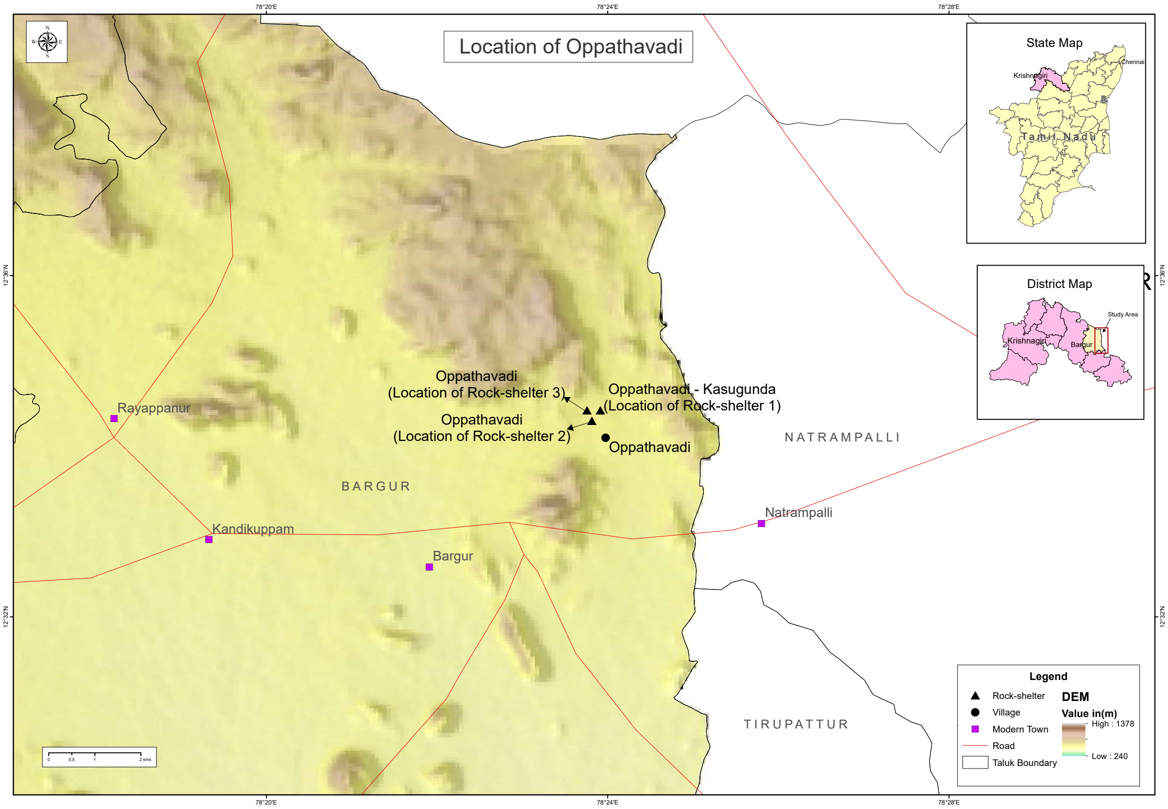
Oppattavadi (12.57333 N; 78.39777 E) lies on the Barugur to Kanamur road via Neralakkottai at a distance of 10 km (Map 4.36.1-4.36.2). Rock paintings in white colour are noticed at three locations on the hillock locally called Thottiyanakuddai and the shelter is locally called as Kasugundu (Fig. 4.36.1-4.36.2).

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface of rock shelter-1is about 2.80 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 10 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 1.5 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2 m. The total painted surface is about 1.5 m. The shelter no.2 is having a total length and breadth of 7 m and over all painted area covers 4.30x2 m. The shelter no.3 is having total length and breadth of about 5 m and over all painted area covers 3.80x2 m.


Location of Oppathavadi
State Map
District Map
Oppathavadi
(Location of Rock-shelter 3)
Oppathavadi - Kasugunda
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Oppathavadi
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Oppathavadi
Rayappanur
BARGUR
NATRAMPALLI
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Natrampalli
TIRUPATTUR
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary

Map 4.36.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Oppathavadi
State Map
District Map
Oppathavadi
(Location of Rock-shelter 3)
Oppathavadi - Kasugunda
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Oppathavadi
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Oppathavadi
Rayappanur
BARGUR
NATRAMPALLI
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Natrampalli
TIRUPATTUR
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.36.2 Location of the rock shelter

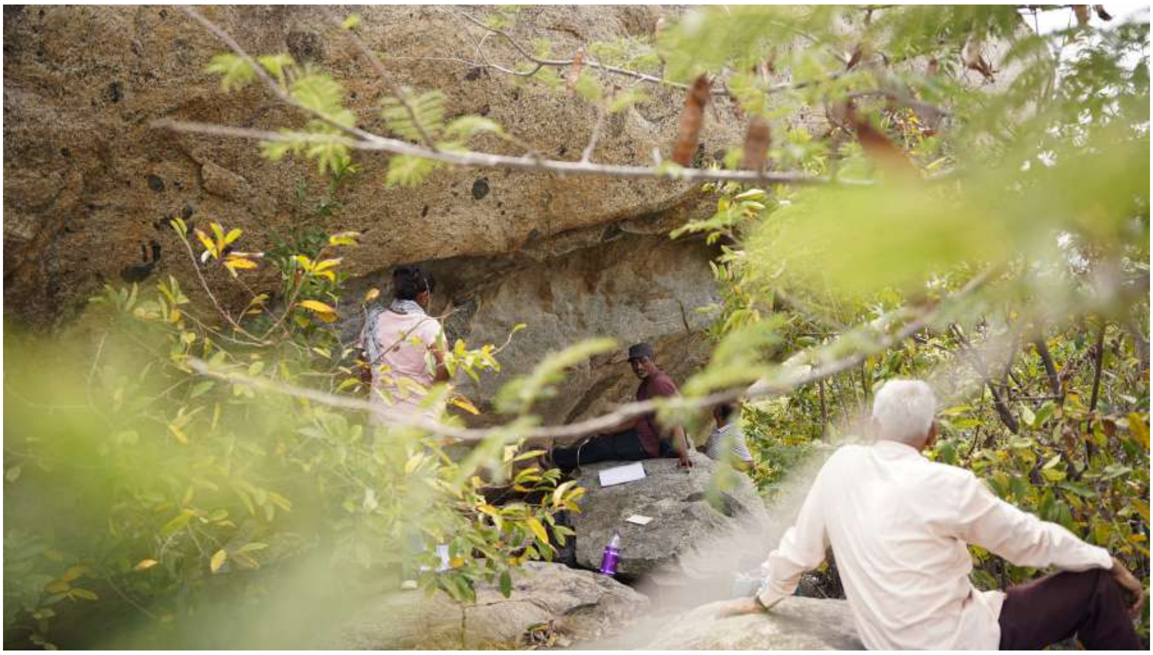


Fig. 4.36.1 General view of the rock shelter

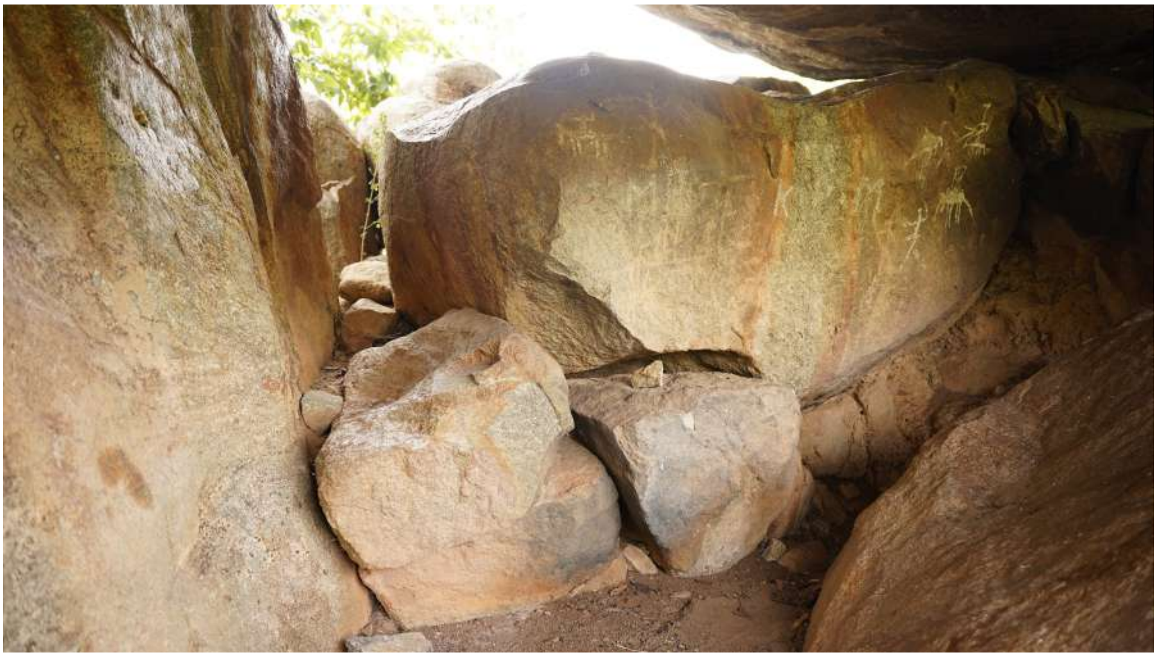


Fig. 4.36.2 General view of the rock shelter

Description

Rock Shelter 1

The paintings in white colour are found on the rock shelter located at Kusukundu. It is located near the plain area. The rock shelter lies about 10 m above the ground. All the paintings here are drawn in lines. The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of anthropomorphic, animals, birds, geometrical signs, damaru, animal raiding and humans fighting scenes can be seen.

Panel Description

In this panel, there are four different patterns of symbols. There are human and bird paintings depicted on the left side and two geometric symbols on the right side. The bird figure is drawn in a simple pattern that looks like 'V'. The human figure has a flat head and a thick line body. Two hands facing each side (right and left), also the legs facing both sides. Symbols of a square divided into boxes. All these are painted with white pigment (Fig. 4.36.3a-4.36.3b).

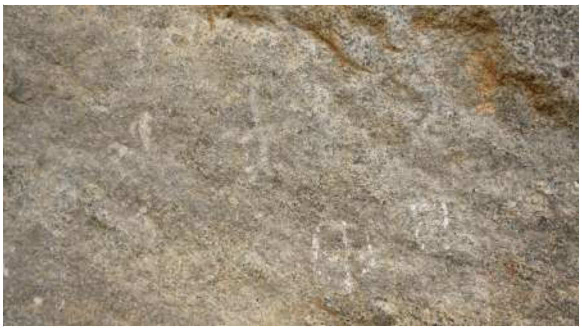


Fig. 4.36.3a Anthropomorphic, bird and geometrical signs

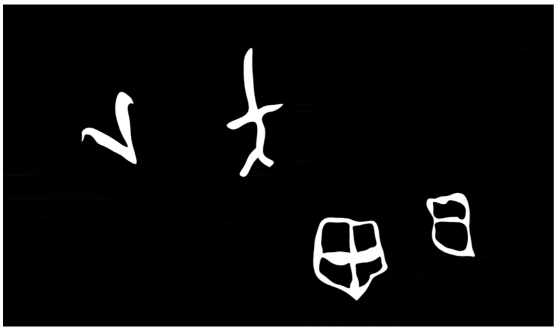


Fig. 4.36.3b Anthropomorphic, bird and geometrical signs

This panel shows a geometric symbol with a white pigment (Fig. 4.36.4a-4.36.4b).

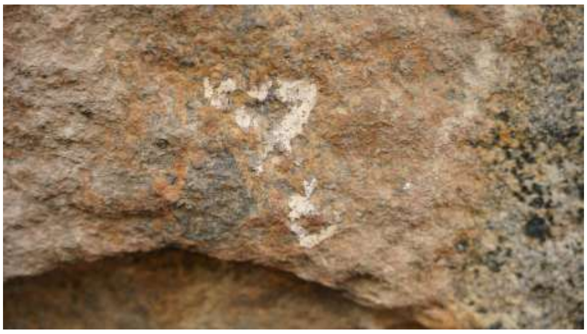


Fig. 4.36.4a Geometric or damaru like sign

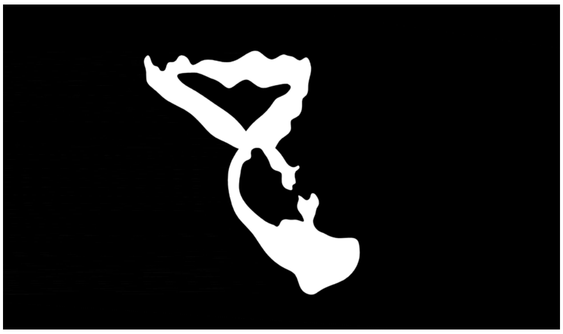


Fig. 4.36.4b Geometric or damaru like sign

This panel shows a scene of a human riding a horse. The human has a round head, the right hand is holding the rein and the left hand is placed on top of the animal. This scene is painted in white pigment (Fig. 4.36.5a-4.36.5b).

Fig. 4.36.5a Animal raiding

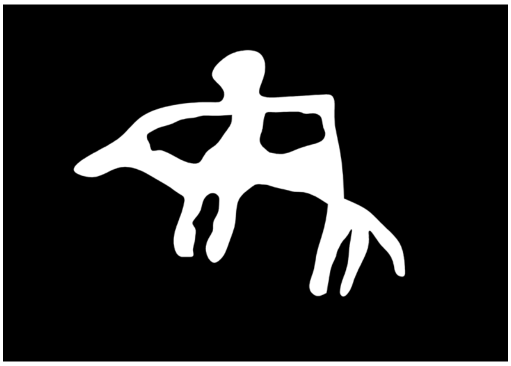


Fig. 4.36.5b Animal raiding

This panel of painting depicts a human riding a horse, holding weapons. The animal is depicted facing left to right, the body is drawn with a thin line, four legs and a long tail. The human is sitting on the horse by holding a weapon in the right hand and the left is holding the reins (Fig. 4.36.6a-4.36.6b).

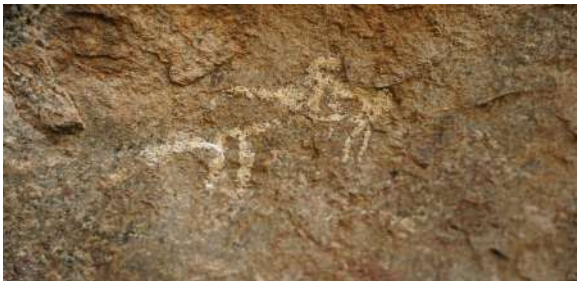


Fig. 4.36.6a Animal raiding

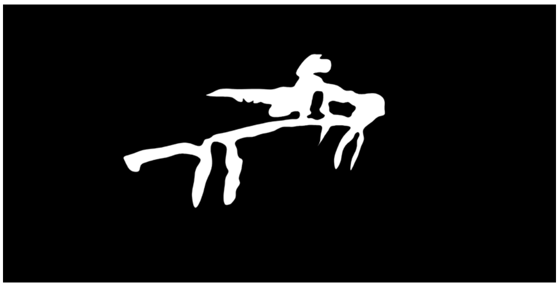


Fig. 4.36.6b Animal raiding

Rock Shelter 2

Few paintings are found in white colour in the rock shelter near the plain. Here, four human figures are shown in two pairs. On the left side pair, there are two human figures walking with arms outstretched. Near to it, two human figures are drawn one below the other. In both of these figures, the hands are shown in different positions. A horizontal line is drawn below these figures and some vertical lines are drawn above it. It is not possible to say for what purpose these figures are depicted separately without weapons. All the figures found here are drawn in lines.

Panel Description

This panel of painting depicts three human figures and an animal. Two human figures male and female, are seen walking by holding hands. This human figure shows the differences in their body structure. The male figure is with a round head is taller than the female one, also a weapon is seen dangling from his hip. The third human figure is standing with raised hands, indicating as if welcoming or sending off the couple (Fig. 4.36.7a-4.36.7b).

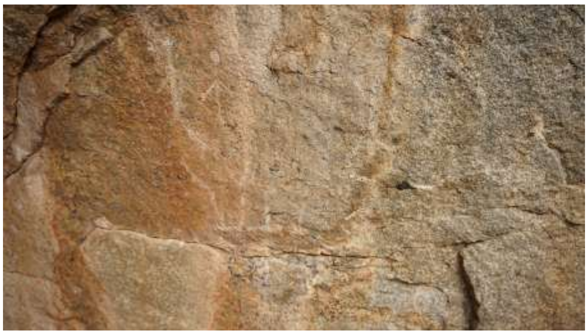


Fig. 4.36.7a Couple and human

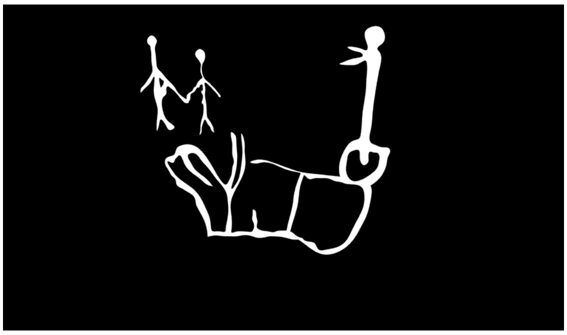


Fig. 4.36.7b Couple and human

Rock Shelter 3

This is a cave site suitable for human habitation. Here, the paintings are found on two rocks which are white in colour. One of them is badly damaged. Depictions of figures like humans, human riders and animals such as horses, birds, dogs and elephants are also seen. Along with a few thematic depictions of conflict etc.

Panel Description

In this group of paintings, human, animal, weapons and bird figures are drawn. Below the bird figure, a dog like animal is seen. At the left top, a man is sitting on an animal and is holding weapons in his hands and another man is standing opposite and seems to be fighting with each other and near to this man a bird figurine is drawn. Below this, a man is riding on the animal with outstretched hands, holding something over his head. To the right, two humans are holding sword like weapons and fighting with each other (Fig. 4.36.8a-4.36.8b).

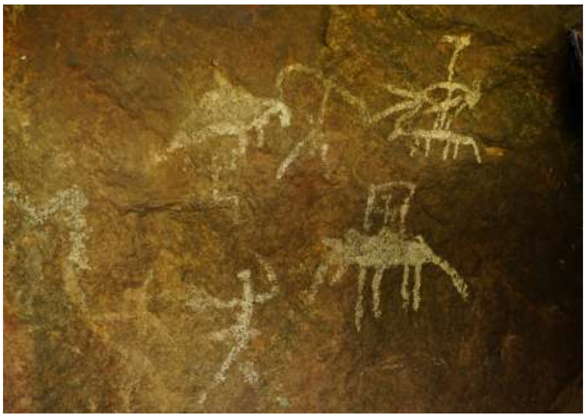


Fig. 4.36.8a Animal riders and humans fight

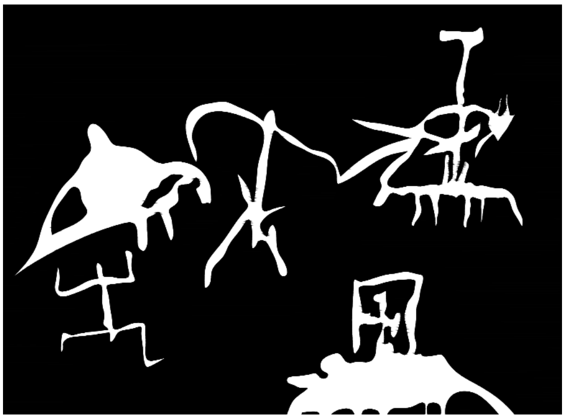


Fig. 4.36.8b Animal riders and humans fight

In this figure, two paintings are in white. These paintings represent human and animal figures. A human figure is drawn with long legs and hands, his right hand holds a trident and the left hand holds a weapon and a sword dangling from his waist. Another man is sitting on the horse and holding a weapon in his hand and meeting the other. (Fig. 4.36.9a-4.36.9b).

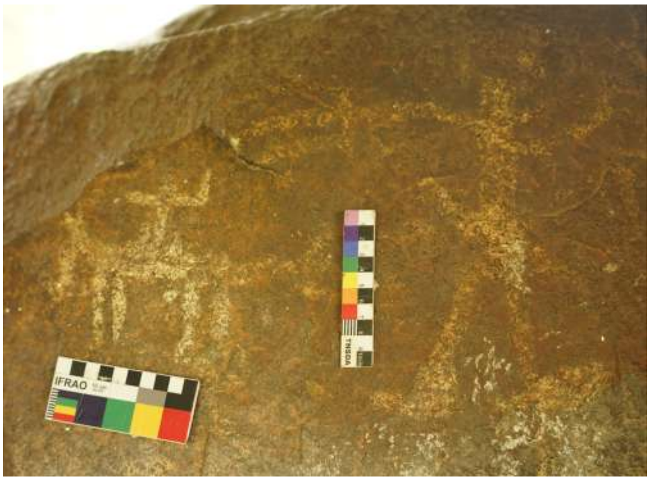


Fig. 4.36.9a Animal rider and human

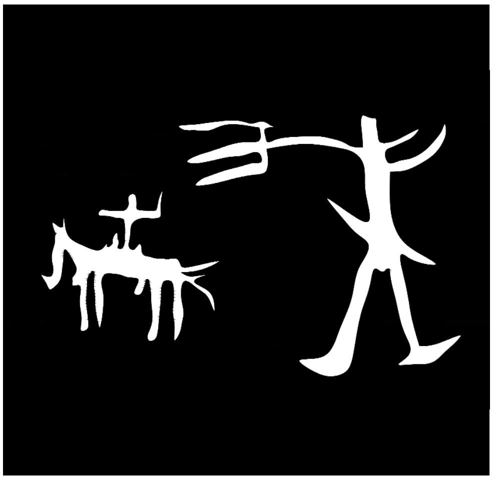


Fig. 4.36.9b Animal rider and human

The paintings are in white. In this, the paintings are faded and not clearly visible. Human figures and animal figures are only seen here. Four humans are drawn here, one human in a standing position is drawn with long legs and hands. Others are sitting on an animal like a horse. The humans are holding weapons in their hands. It could be a fighting scene (Fig. 4.36.10a-4.36.10b).

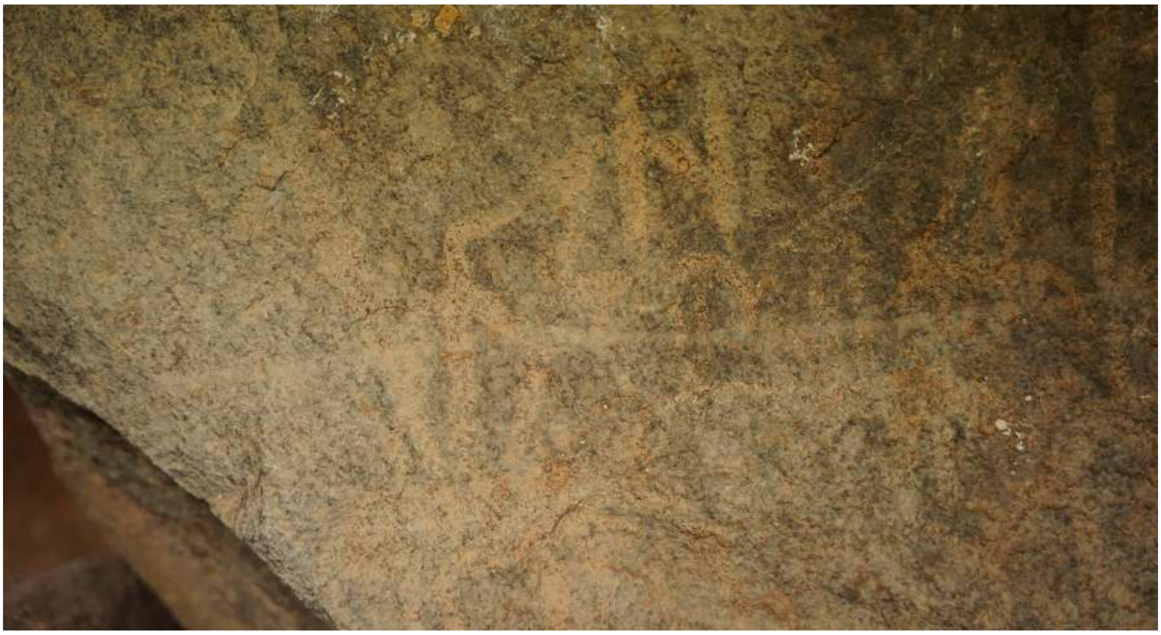


Fig. 4.36.10a Animal riders

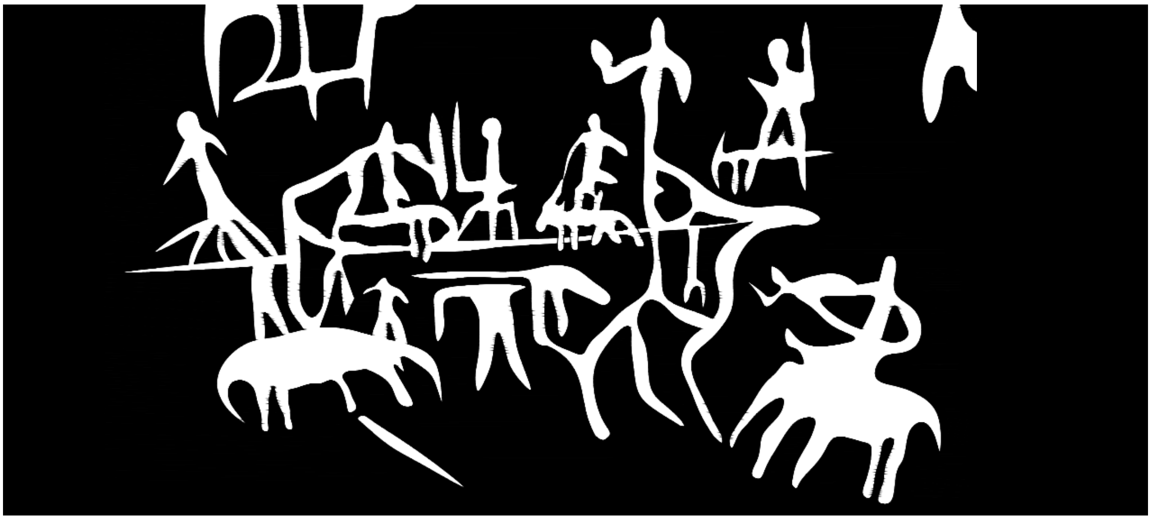


Fig. 4.36.10b Animal riders

The rock shelter-3 is having petroglyphs. A man stands with outstretched hands and legs. The petroglyph is found on a rock boulder. The man is holding a sword or some kind of weapon, miniature in size measuring around 15 to 20 cm (Fig. 4.36.11a-4.36.11b).

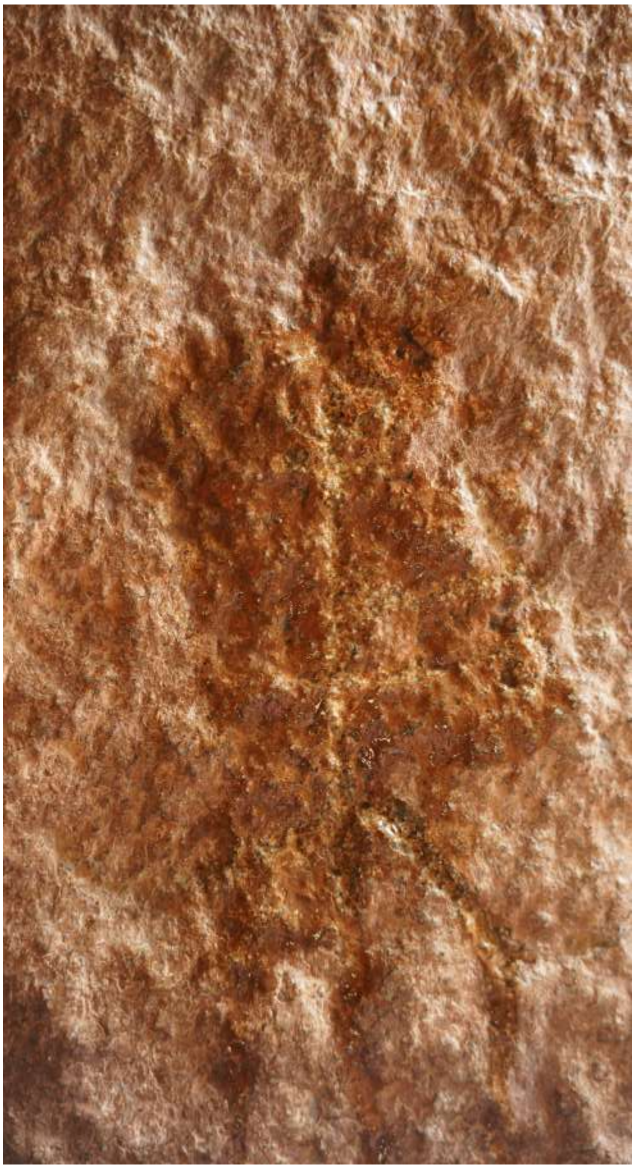


Fig. 4.36.11a Human

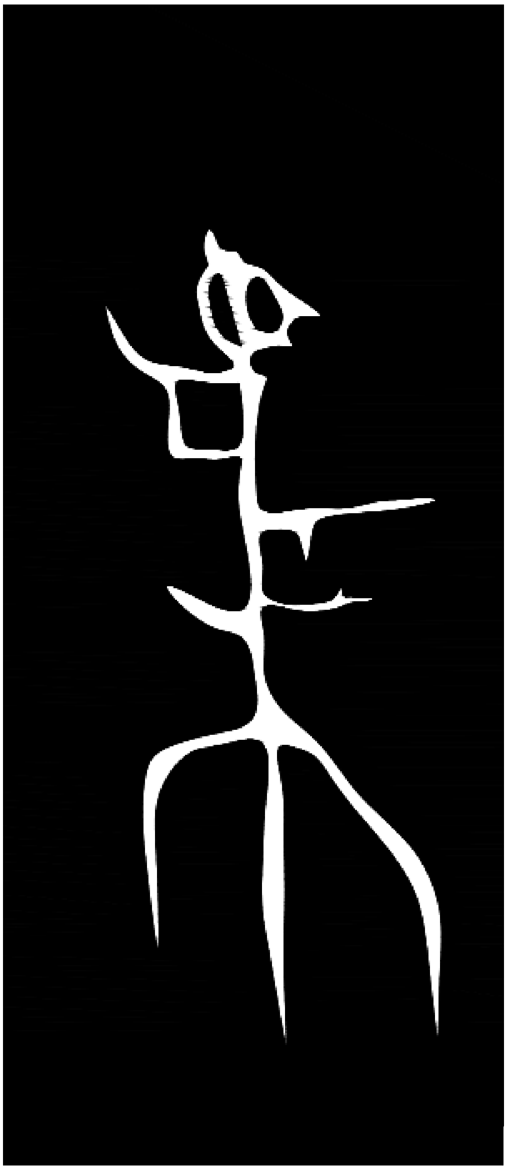
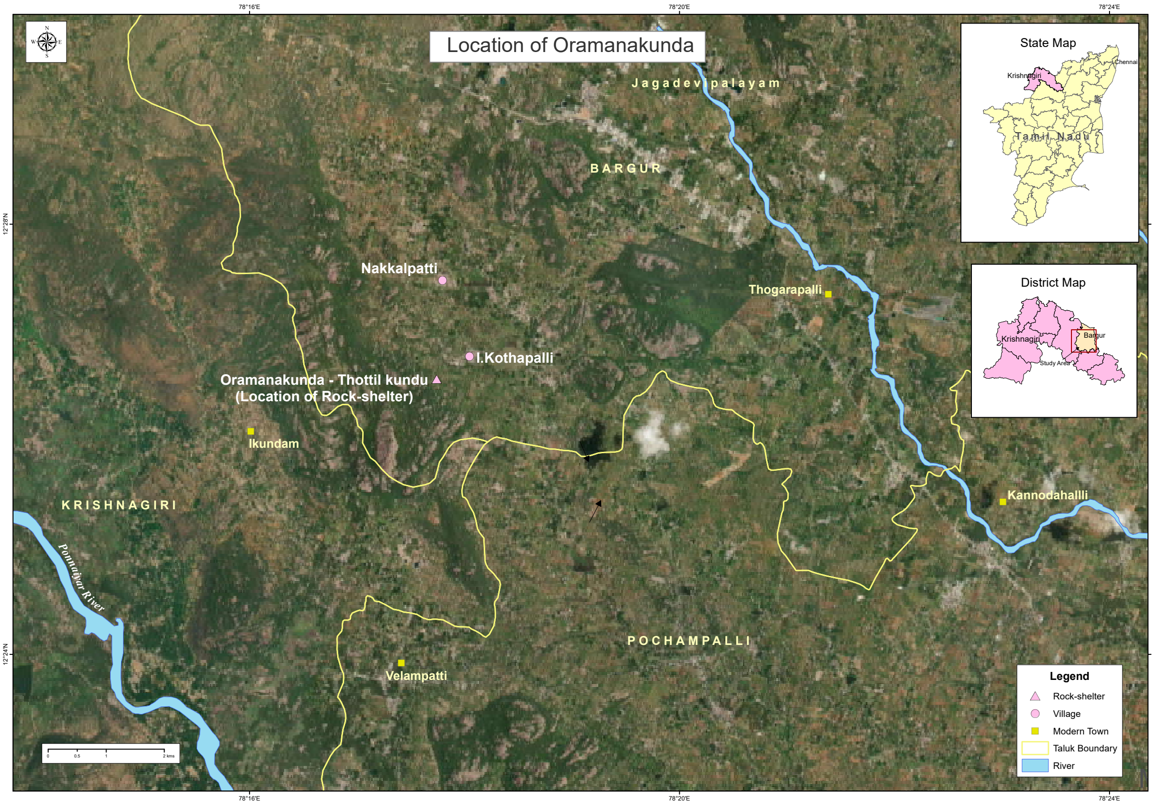


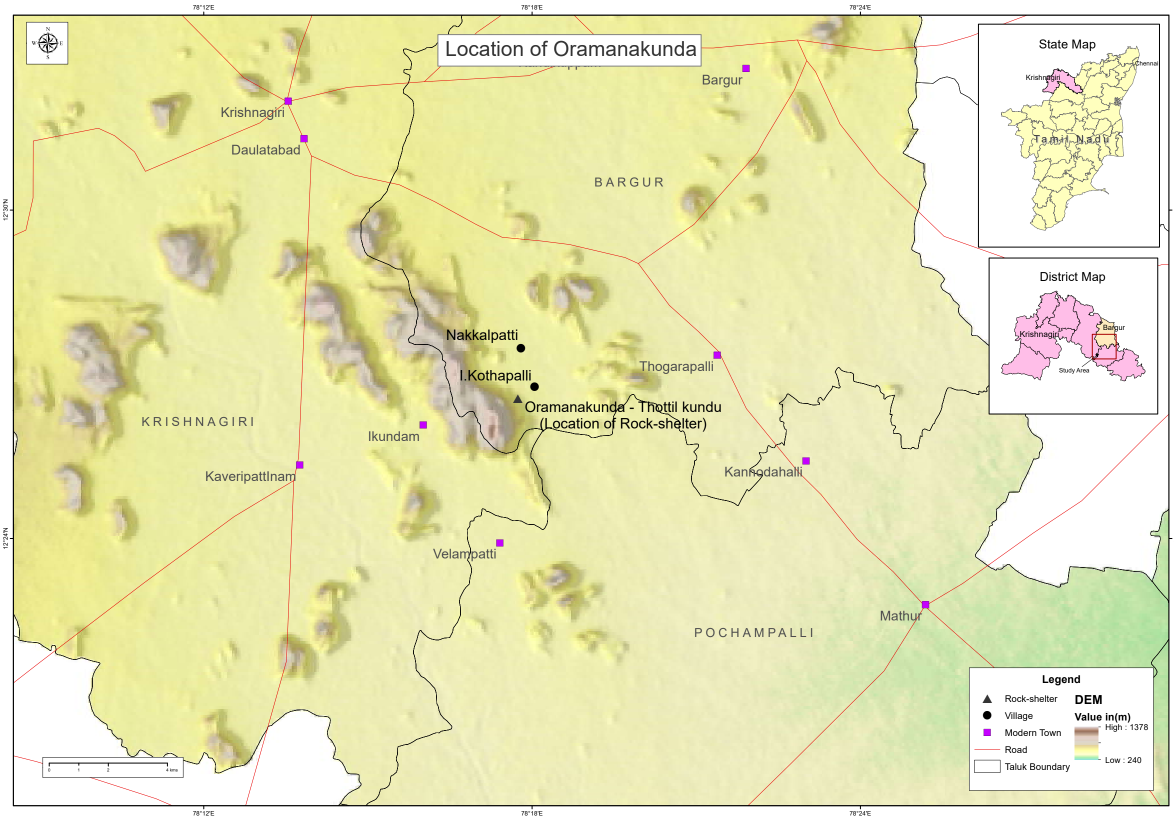
Fig. 4.36.11b Human

4.37. Oramanagunta

The village Oramanagunda (12. 62296 N; 78. 37101 E) is situated on Bargur - Kuppam road at a distance of 14 km to the north of Bargur and located near the state border with Andhra Pradesh (Map 4.37.1-4.37.2). The rock art is located in two different contexts: one is a rock shelter and the other is a megalithic cist burial. The rock shelter lies 1 km to the north of the village, known locally as Thotiyanguddai, and the cist burial is located 1.5 km to the northwest of the present village. A group of human figures is shown in stick like manner in a fighting mode. Above this, there are dots like images. Apart from this yet another group of human figures is shown seated on an animal fighting with each other. One human is shown with weapons in his right arm. A few geometric and abstract symbols can be noticed.


Location of Oramanakunda
Jagadevipalayam
BARGUR
Nakkalpatti
Thogarapalli
I.Kothapalli
Oramanakunda - Thottil kundu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Ikundam
KRISHNAGIRI
Ponnaiyar River
Kannodahallli
POCHAMPALLI
Velampatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
River

Map 4.37.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Oramanakunda
Bargur
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
BARGUR
Nakkalpatti
I.Kothapalli
Thogarapalli
Oramanakunda - Thottil kundu
(Location of Rock-shelter)
KRISHNAGIRI
Ikundam
Kaveripattinam
Kannodahalli
Velampatti
Mathur
POCHAMPALLI
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.37.2 Location of the rock shelter

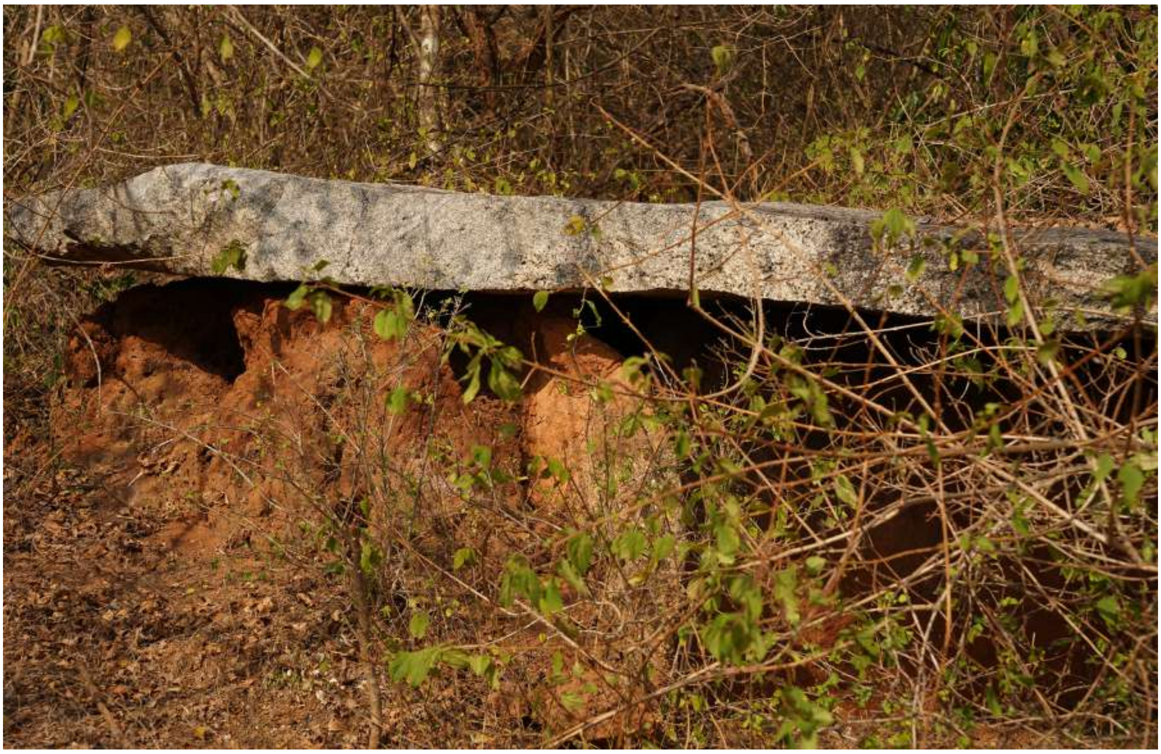


Fig. 4.37.1 *General view of the dolmen*

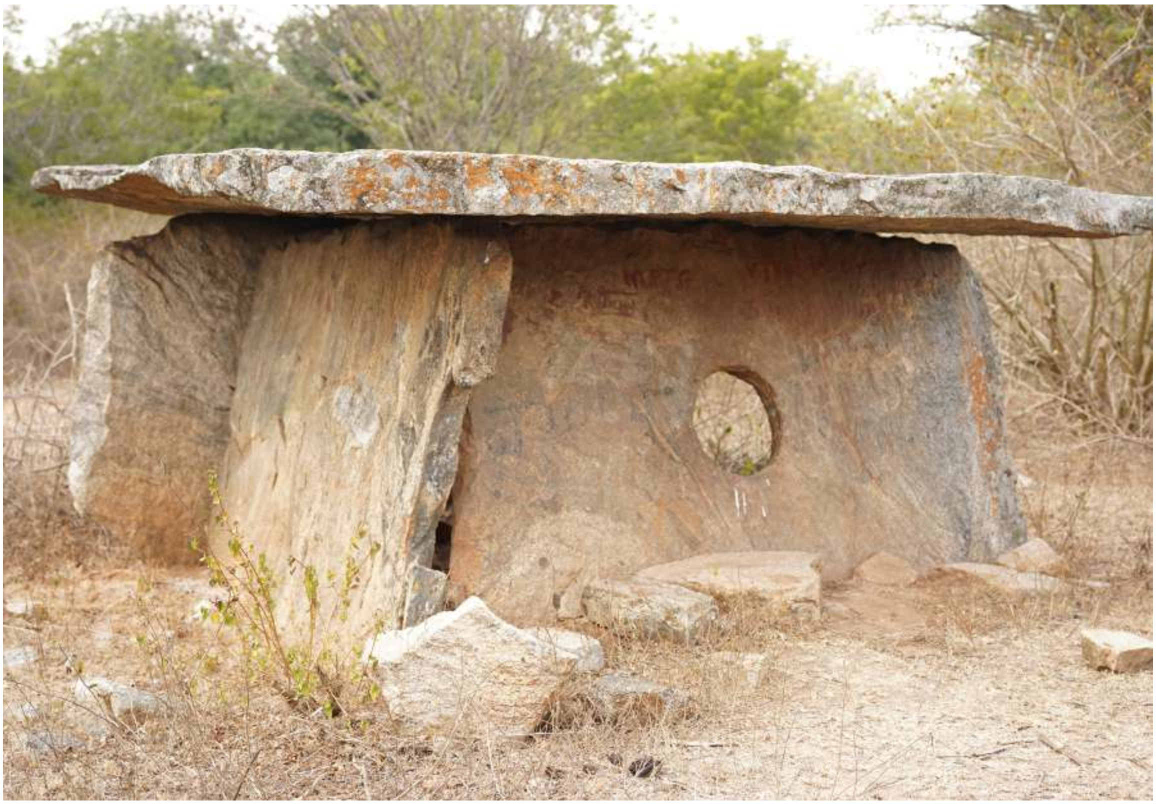


Fig. 4.37.2 *General view of the dolmen*

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 2.10 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 15.40 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 1 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2 m. The total painted area is about 2.60mx90cm.

Description

Some symbols are drawn in white colour on the rocky outcrop called thotta-kuddu located near the plain. At the same time, some paintings in red are seen in a faded state. It may have been a habitation in the past as it could accommodate about 50 people. Now local people are worshiping these paintings.

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of geometrical and anthropomorphic features, human, animal riders, x-ray of egg like shell, sun, flower and fish like signs could be seen in the Oramanagunda paintings.

Panel Description

Dolmen 1

The pictographs are found on the interior side of the orthostats. The orthostats with paintings are showing cracks and fissures due to weathering. The present condition of the pictographs is highly faded and barely visible even after enhancement. The pictographs made of white and black pigments are evident here. The topmost painting is a geometric symbol of a rectangle, it is subdivided into seven smaller rectangles within it. It's made of thin white strokes, almost everything faded, only some of its residues are barely visible. Immediately beneath it, there are instances of another pictograph which is completely out of shape i.e., an unidentified pictograph made of fine strokes of white ochre (Fig. 4.37.3a-4.37.3b).

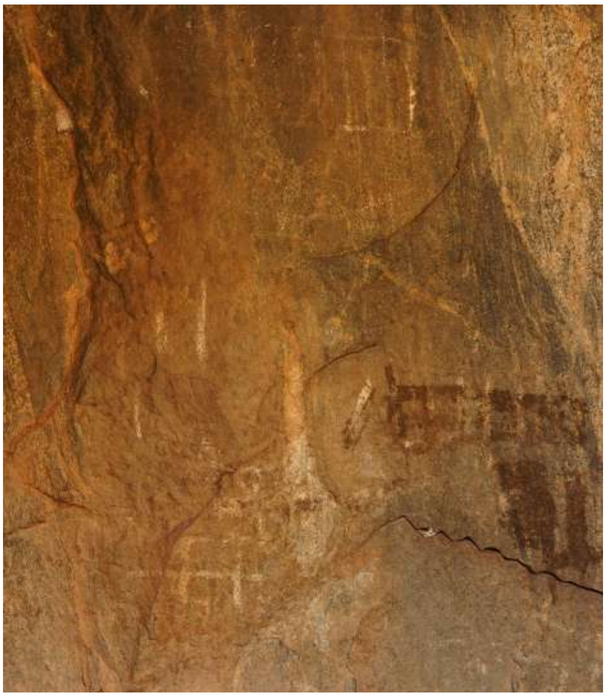


Fig. 4.37.3a Geometrical and anthropomorphic sign

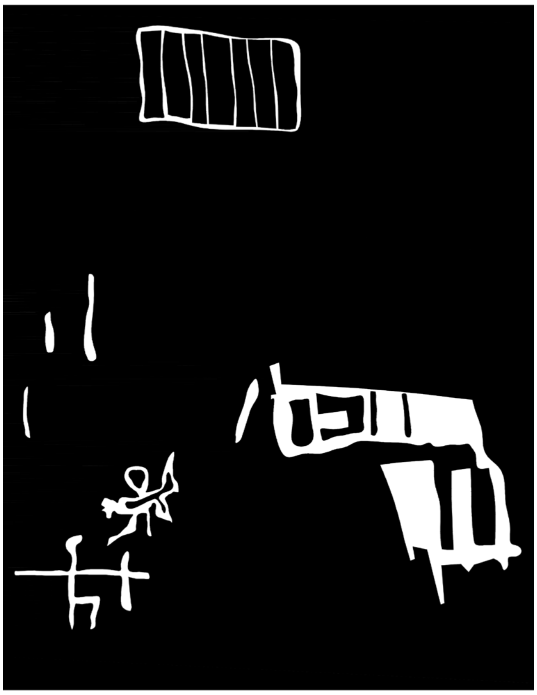


Fig. 4.37.3b Geometrical and anthropomorphic sign

Immediately beneath the previous one, there are two visible white paintings, and some are unidentifiable too. The topmost one is a human figure made in outline fashion without infilling. Slightly beneath it, there is an ithyphallic human figure of stick fashion, shown with extended hands, of which the right one is holding some object which is pointed downwards, the head portion is highlighted with a thickened stroke (Fig. 4.37.4a-4.37.4b).

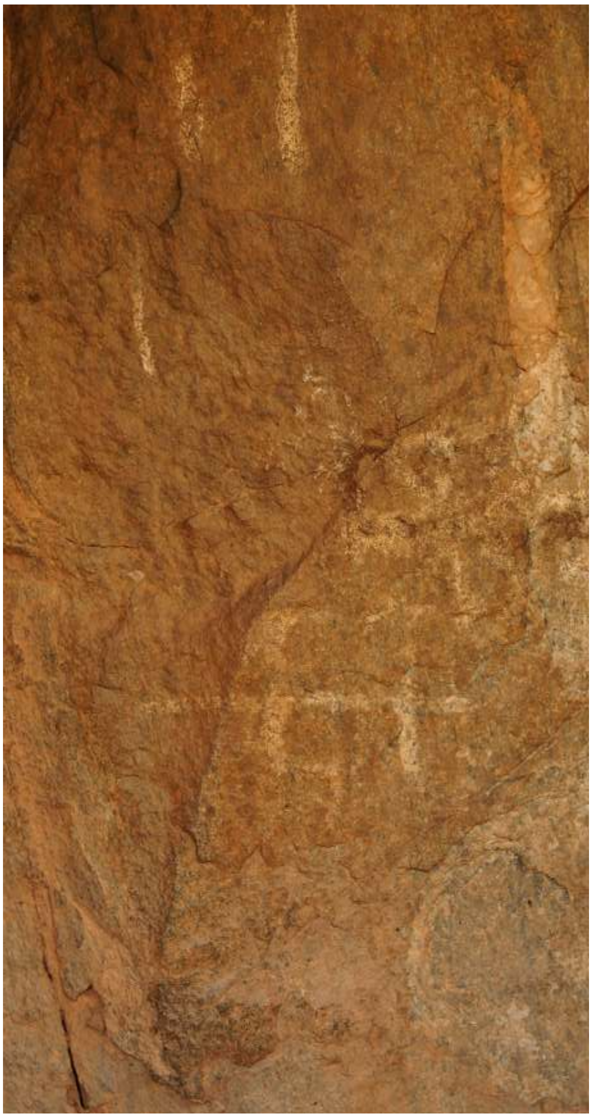


Fig. 4.37.4a Human

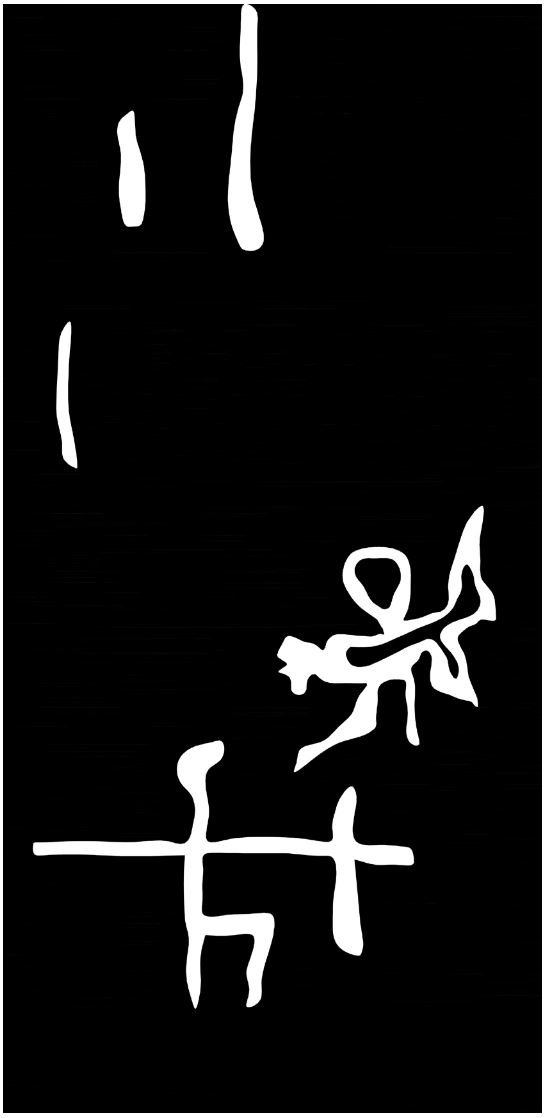


Fig. 4.37.4b Human

Dolmen 2

The human form is done in flat wash, two humans riding and dot marks. On the right side, there were two hunters one below another sitting on an animal. Both riders are raising their right hand upwards. And the left hand is bent downwards. There are three anthropomorphic images standing close to the hunter and they are also raising their right hands upwards and their left hand bent downwards. On the left side, four parallel dot lines are placed in a vertical manner. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.5a-4.37.5b).

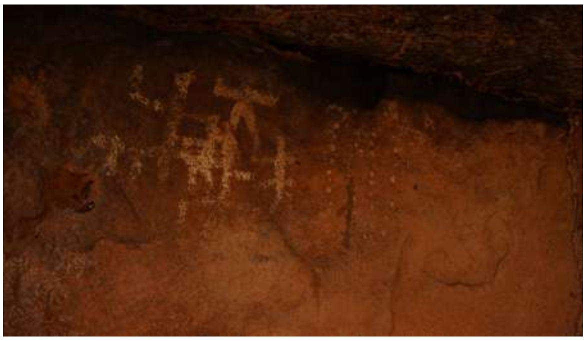


Fig. 4.37.5a *Animal riders*

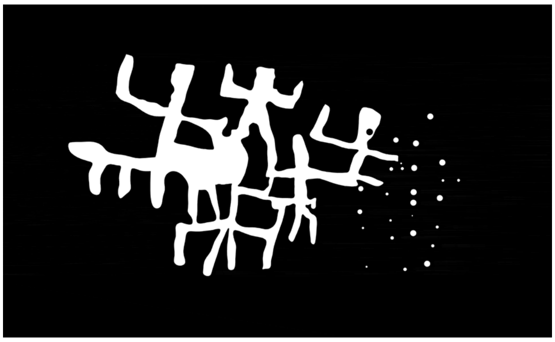


Fig. 4.37.5b *Animal riders*

Rock Shelter

The figure shown here is in X-ray form like an egg shell. An oblong figure is intersected horizontally and vertically at the top. Among the four quadrants like boxes the bottom two have small circles in a vertical manner. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.6a-4.37.6b).

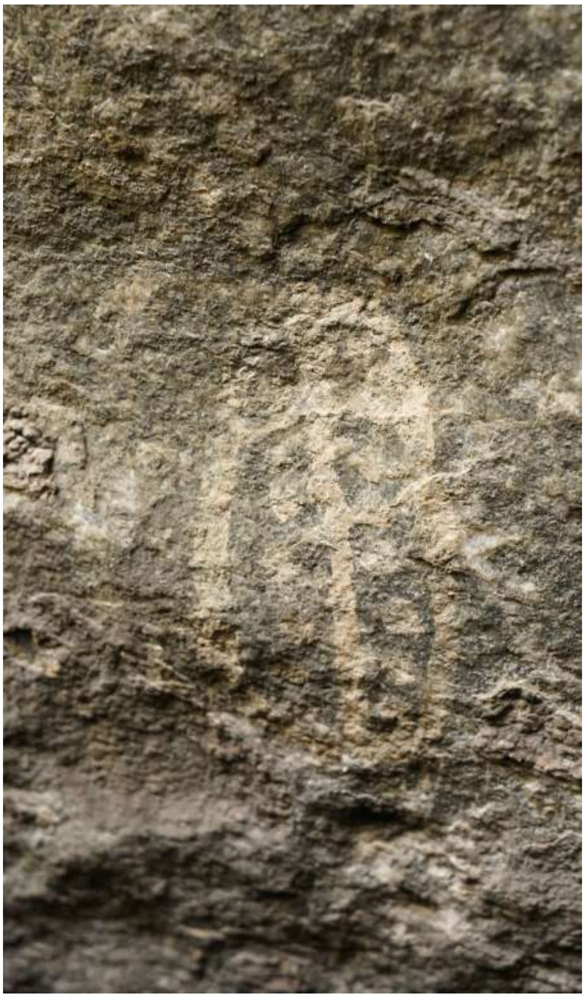


Fig. 4.37.6a *X-ray of egg like shell*

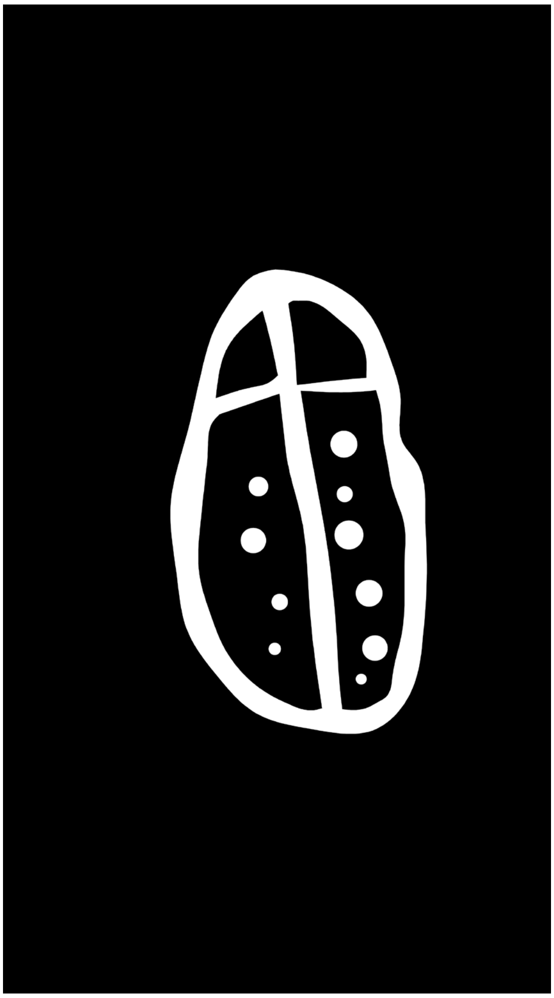


Fig. 4.37.6b *X-ray of egg like shell*

The figures in this panel are one oblong and three circles in an X-ray form. On the right side, an oblong shape having the anthropomorphic form in a stick-like sketch. The other three are not unidentifiable. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.7a-4.37.7b).

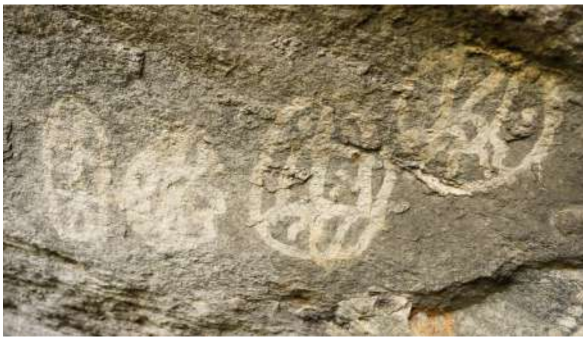


Fig. 4.37.7a X-ray of oblong and three circle

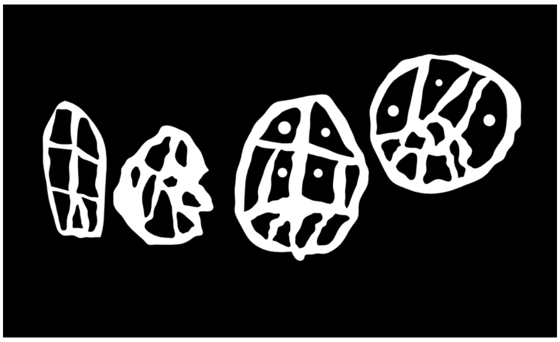


Fig. 4.37.7b X-ray of oblong and three circle

The figure shown in this panel is an X-ray form of an oblong-shaped sign. The oblong shape is intersected by horizontal and vertical lines and some of the boxes are having small circles. The outer portion of the oblong shape is encircled by dots. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.8a-4.37.8b).

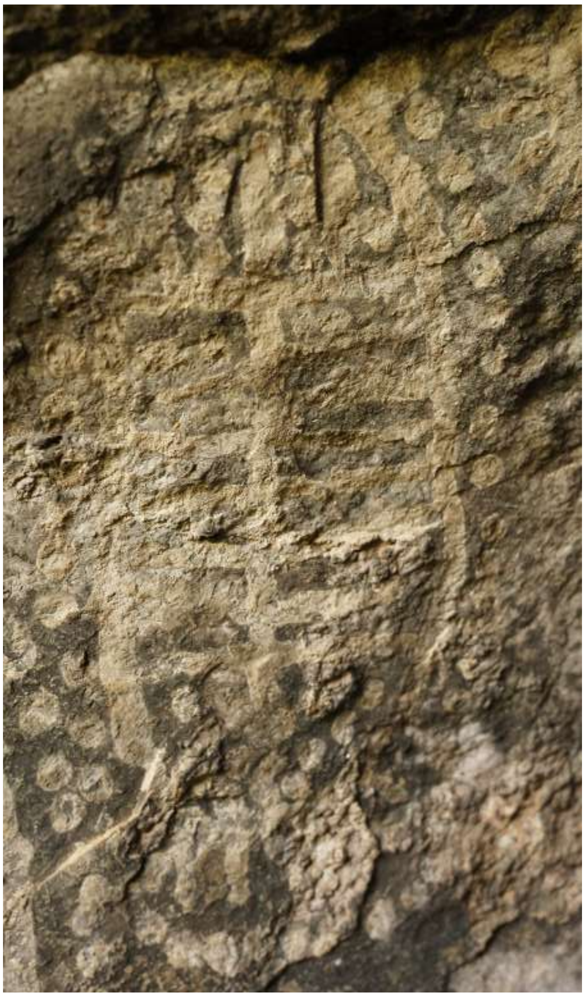


Fig. 4.37.8a X-ray of oblong sign

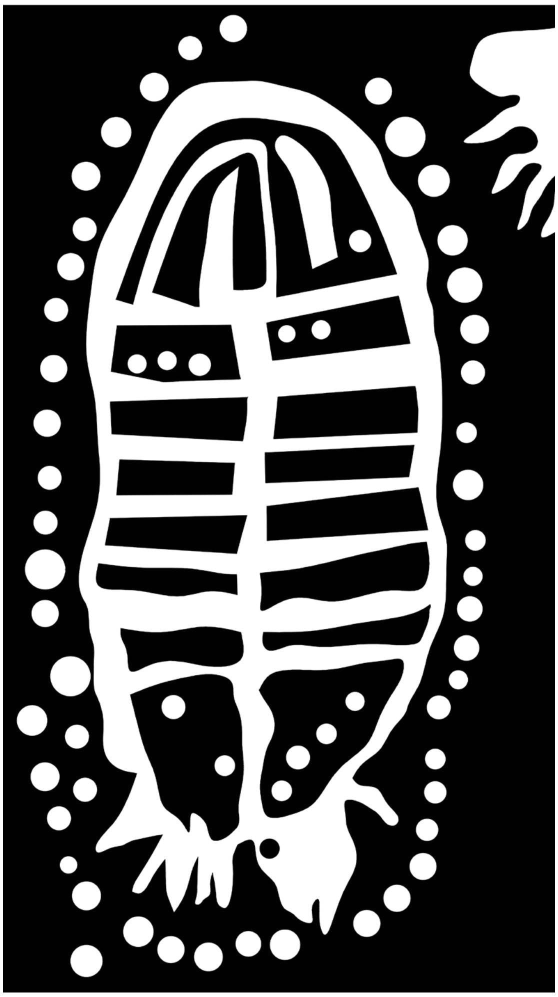


Fig. 4.37.8b X-ray of oblong sign

The figure is shown double X-ray form of oblong shape signs. The oblong shapes are intersected by horizontal and vertical lines and some of the boxes are having small circles. The outer portion of the oblong shapes are having the decorative dot marks. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.9a-4.37.9b).

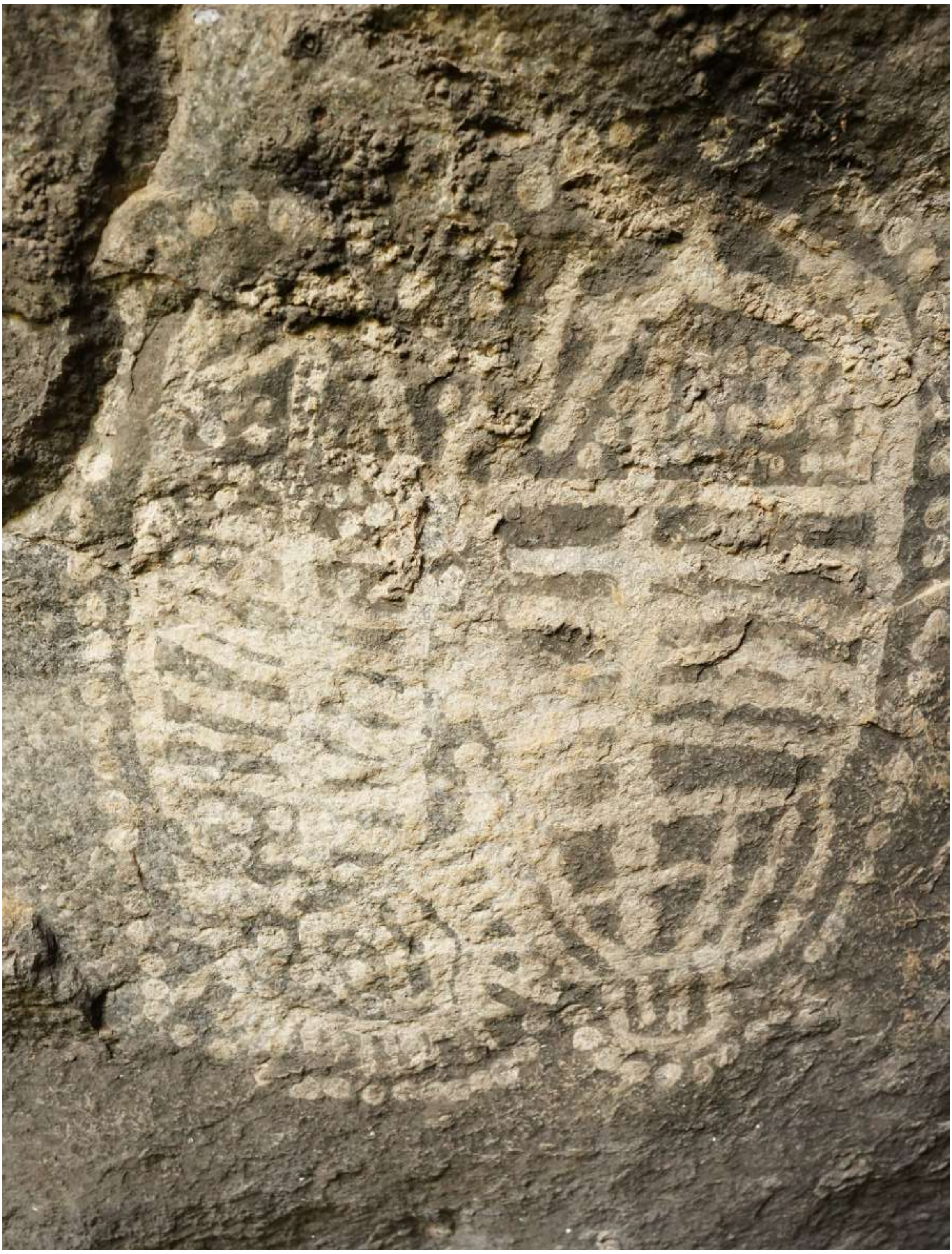


Fig. 4.37.9a Double X-ray of oblong sign

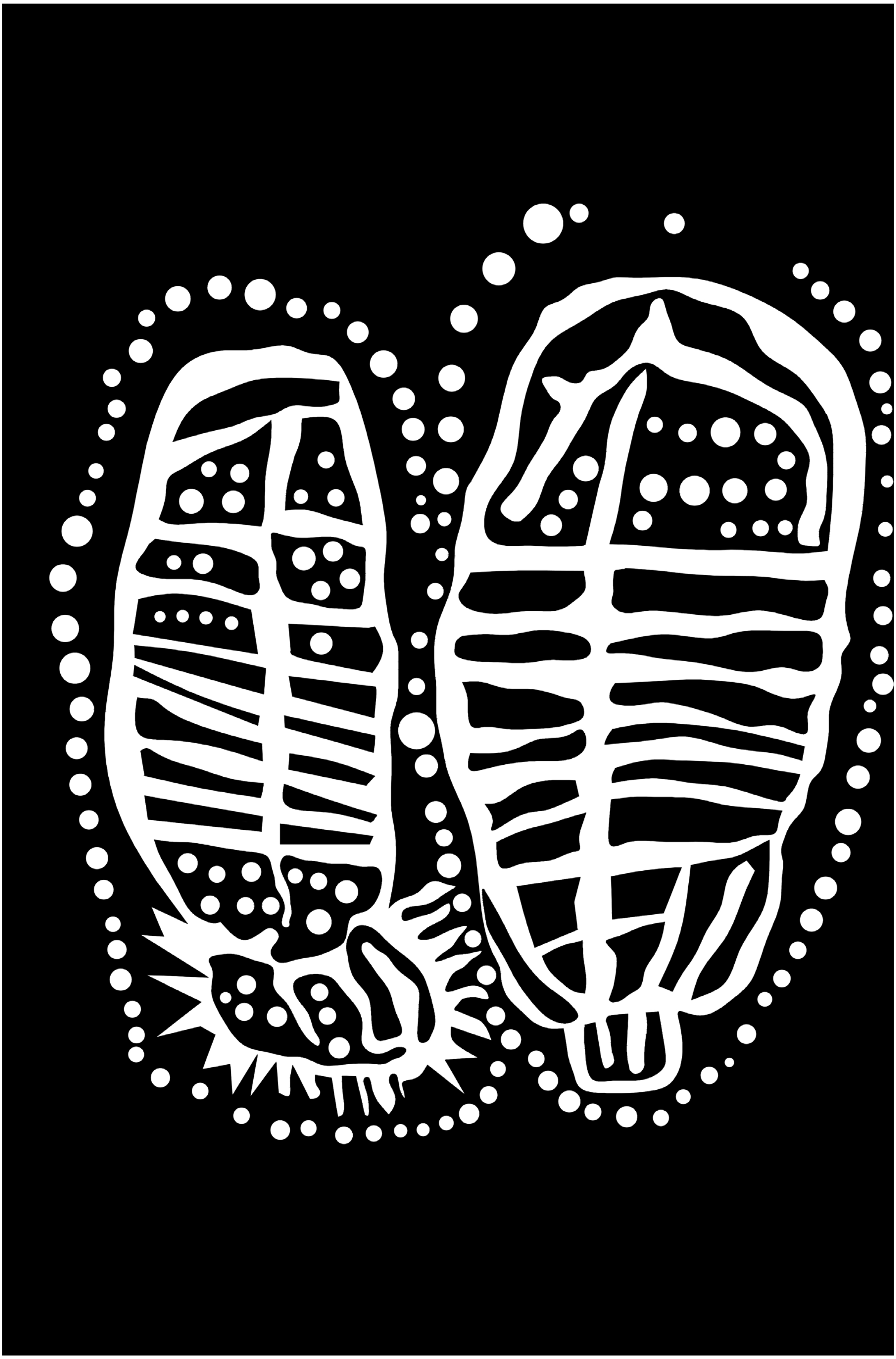


Fig. 4.37.9b Double X-ray of oblong sign

The figure shows a flower like motif. The flower is having several dots or small circle marks in the middle. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.10a-4.37.10b).

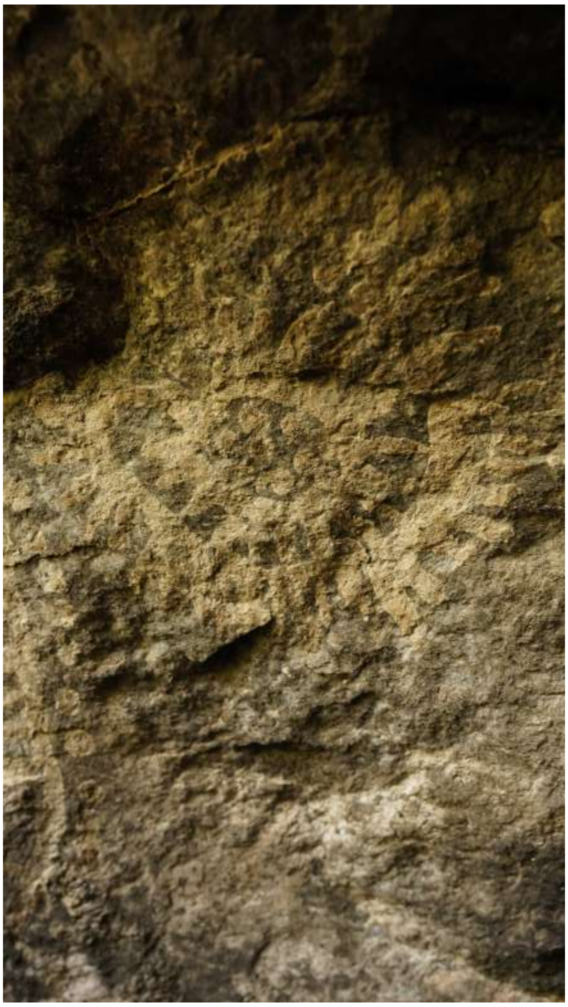


Fig. 4.37.10a Flower like motif

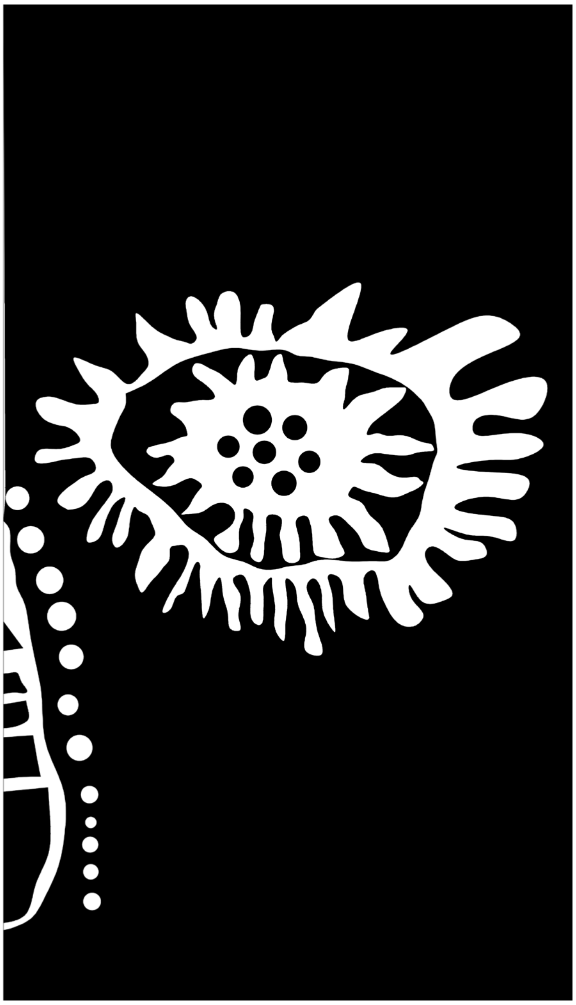


Fig. 4.37.10b Flower like motif

The figures in this panel look like a star, fish like signs and stick like signs. At the top left, a V-shaped line is painted. At the top right, a small star is painted with two small strokes. At the bottom, three fish like signs are painted in outline. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.11a-4.37.11b).

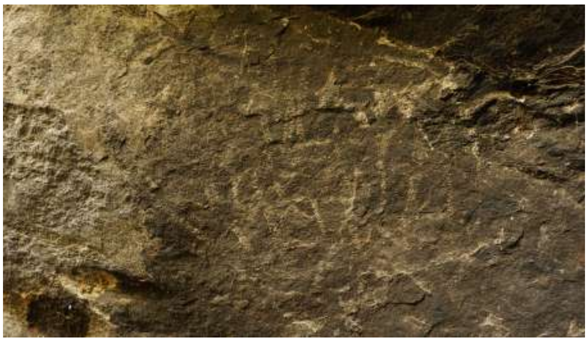


Fig. 4.37.11a Star, fish and stick like signs

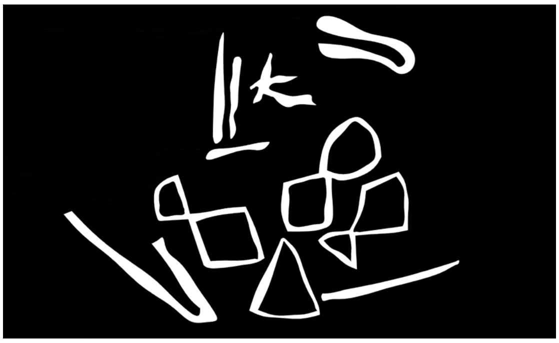


Fig. 4.37.11b Star, fish and stick like signs

The figure is shown with a trident and V-shaped sign. An arrow like sign is marked with three diagonal lines that meet at the top. the Arrow mark is supported on each side by the inverted V-shaped lines. The colour of the painting is white pigment (Fig. 4.37.12a-4.37.12b).

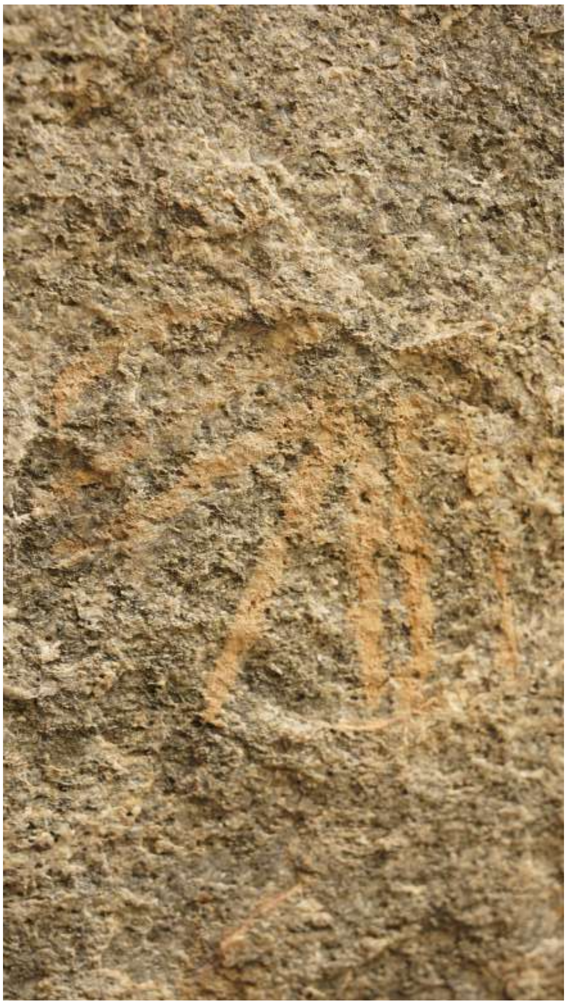


Fig. 4.37.12a Arrow and "v" like signs

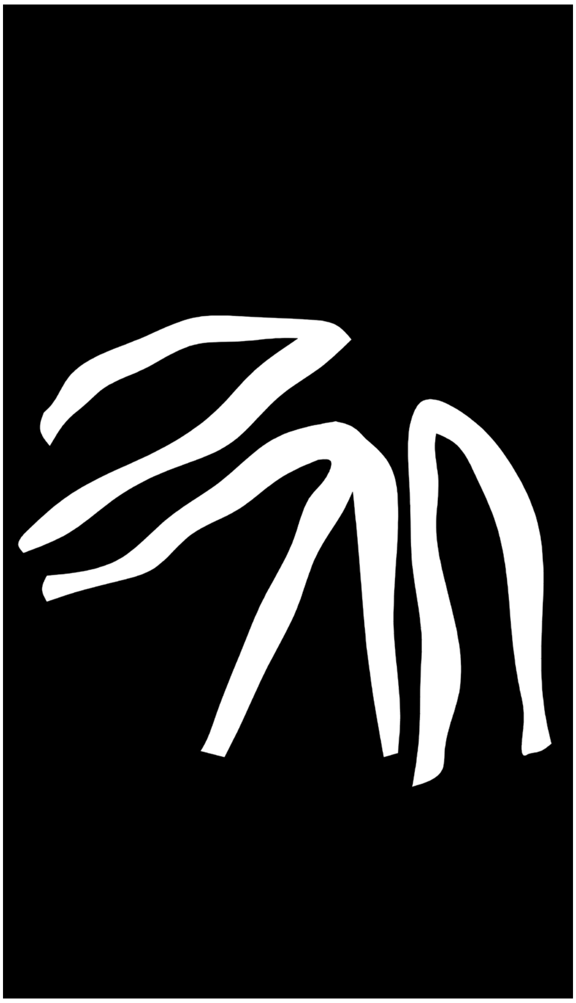


Fig. 4.37.12b Arrow and "v" like signs

The figure is shown as a half circle having two parallel vertical lines from its middle. Two parallel lines touch the middle part of the half circle. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.37.13a-4.37.13b).

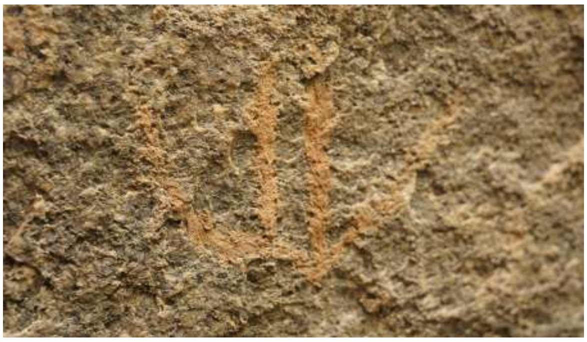


Fig. 4.37.13a Unidentified sign

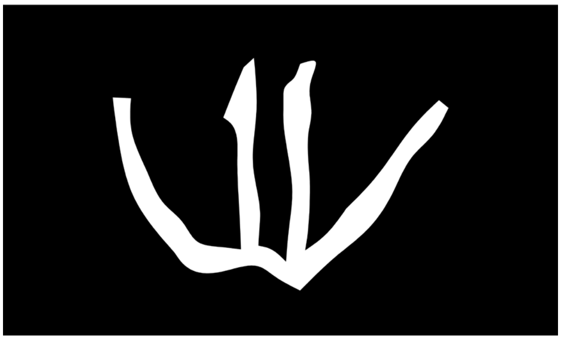


Fig. 4.37.13b Unidentified sign

The figure shown here is an unidentified sign. The image is partially divided into two boxes in outline. The image is not complete. The colour of the painting is red ochre (Fig. 4.37.14a-4.37.14b).

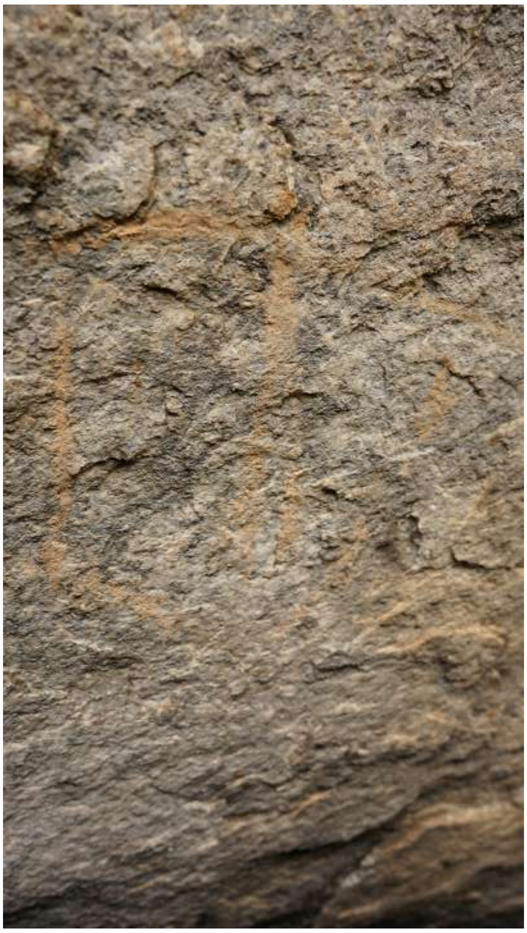


Fig. 4.37.14a Unidentified sign

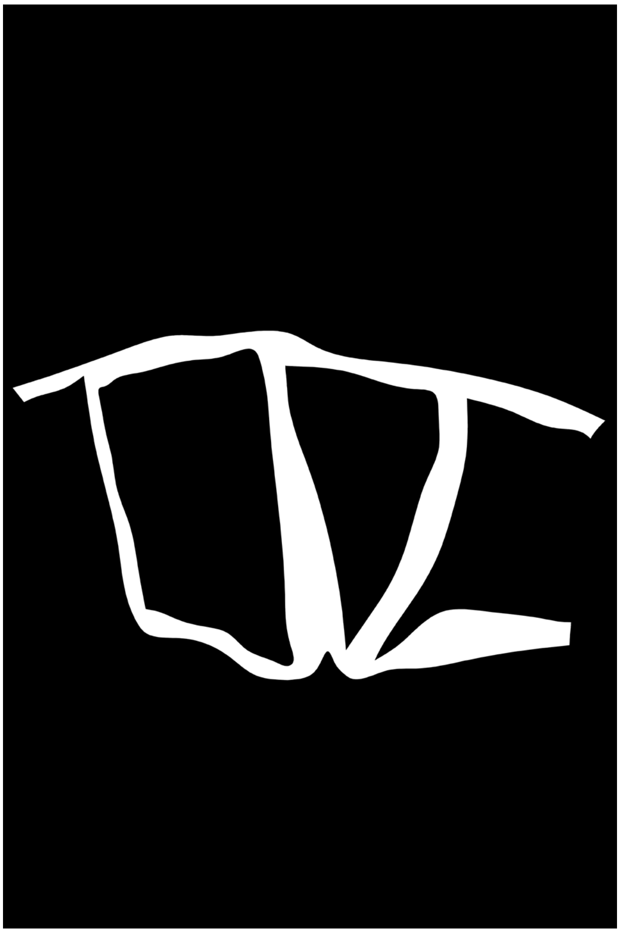


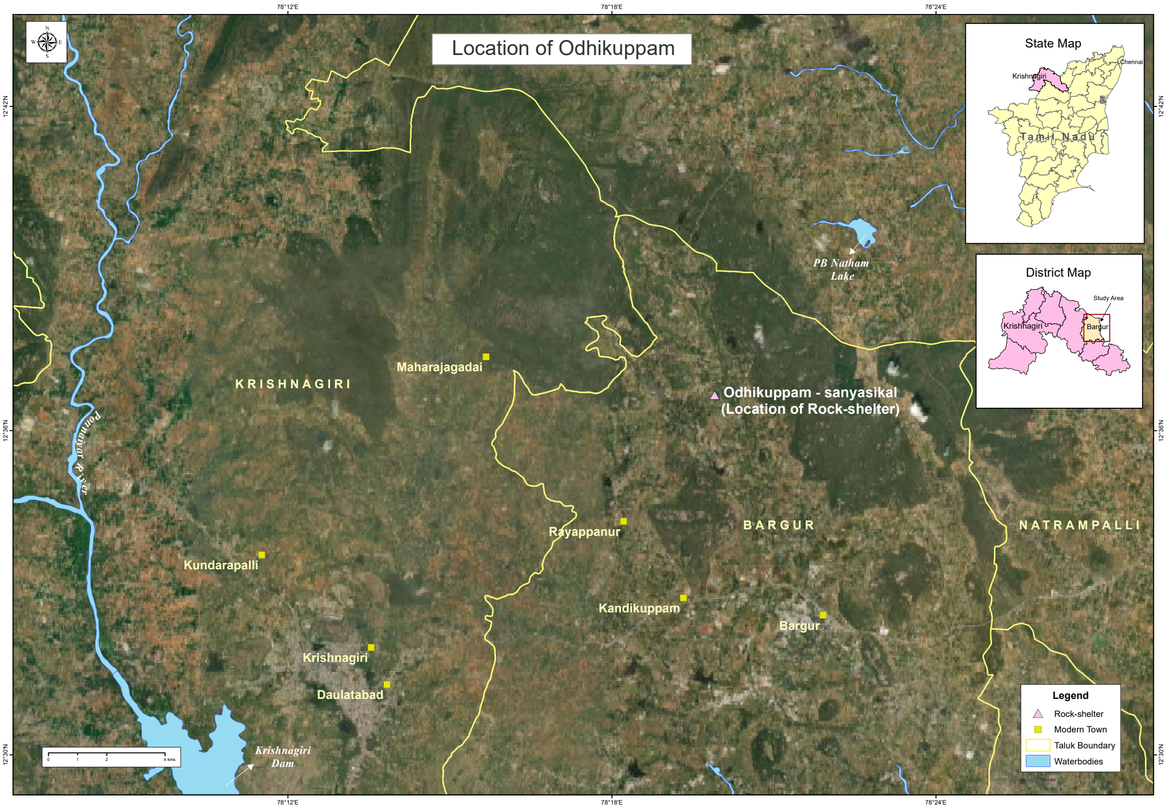
Fig. 4.37.14b Unidentified sign

4.38. Odhikuppam

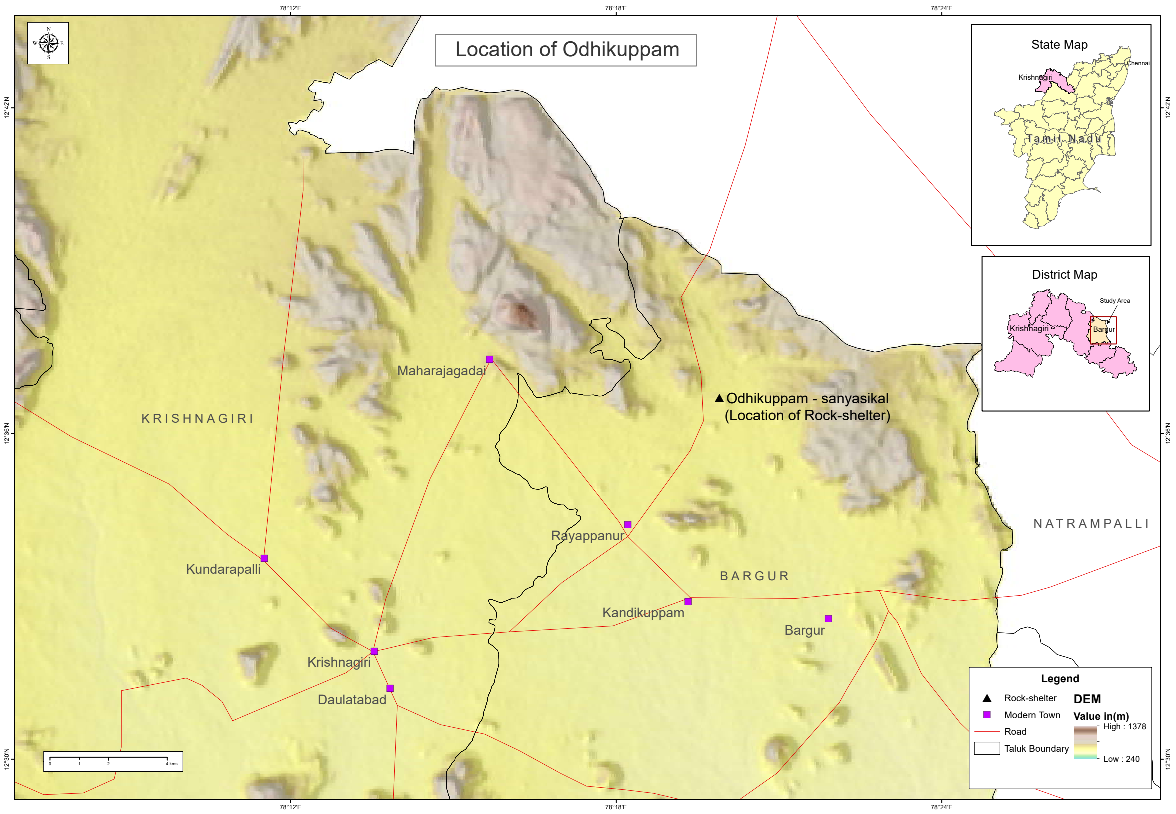
The site of Odhikuppam (N 12.61086 E 78.33171) is located in the Bargur taluk of Krishnagiri district (Maps 4.38.1-4.38.2). The village is locally known as Odhikuppam Melkottai. The village lies at a distance of 6 km to the south of Gollapalli and 8 km to the west of Varattanapalli. The rock shelter is locally known as *AC paarai* or *sanyasikal.* The hillock has dolmenoid cists constructed on the rocky surface of the hill. The umbrella shaped rock shelter faces the southern part of the village, is noticed about 100 m from the plain surface. The paintings are made of white and they contain human figurines (Figs. 4.38.1-4.38.4).

Rock Shelter

The total length of the painted surface is about 2.50 m, the total length of the rock shelter is about 3.20 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 1.80 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 1 m. The total painted area is about 250 x 60 cm. The documentation was carried out from left to right.


Location of Odhikuppam
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Krishnagiri
Bargur
PB Natham Lake
Maharajagadai
KRISHNAGIRI
Odhikuppam - sanyasikal
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Ponnaiyar River
Rayappanur
BARGUR
NATRAMPALLI
Kundarapalli
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Krishnagiri Dam
Legend
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°42'N
12°36'N
12°30'N

Map 4.38.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Odhikuppam
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Krishnagiri
Bargur
Maharajagadai
KRISHNAGIRI
Odhikuppam - sanyasikal
(Location of Rock-shelter)
NATRAMPALLI
Rayappanur
Kundarapalli
BARGUR
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Legend
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240
78°12'E
78°18'E
78°24'E
12°42'N
12°36'N
12°30'N

Map 4.38.2 Location of the rock shelter

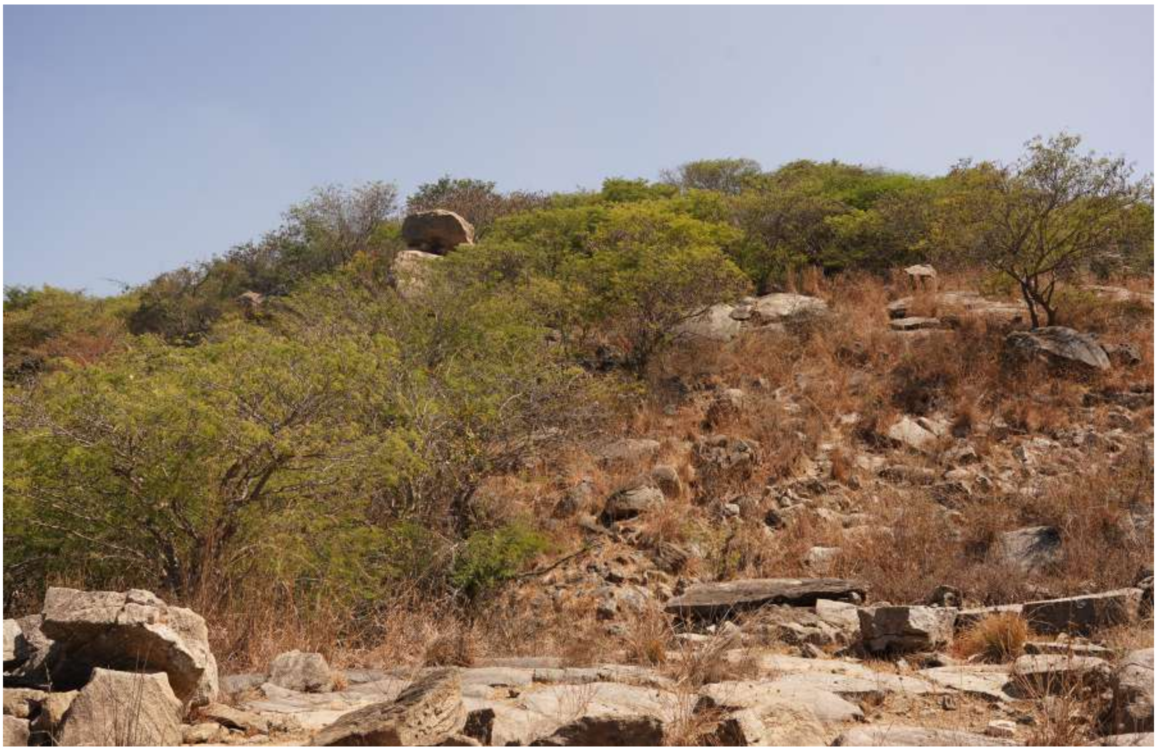


Fig. 4.38.1 General view of the rock shelter

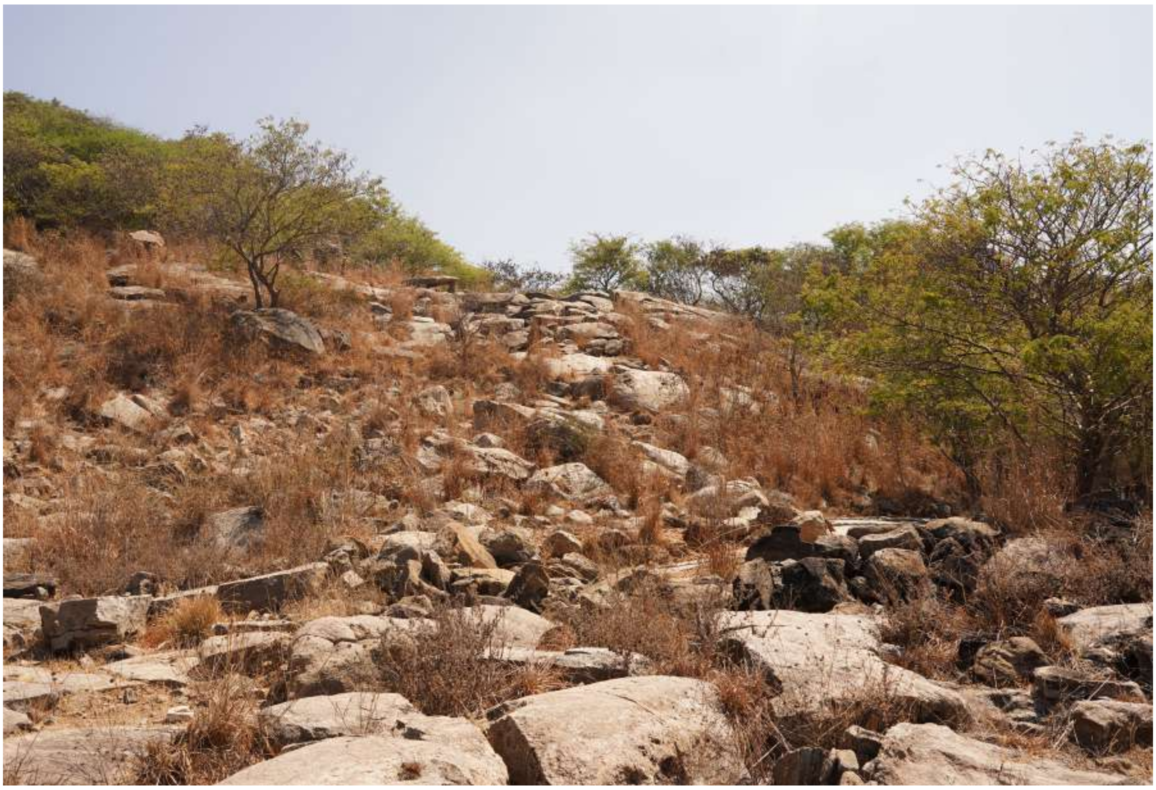


Fig. 4.38.2 General view of the rock shelter

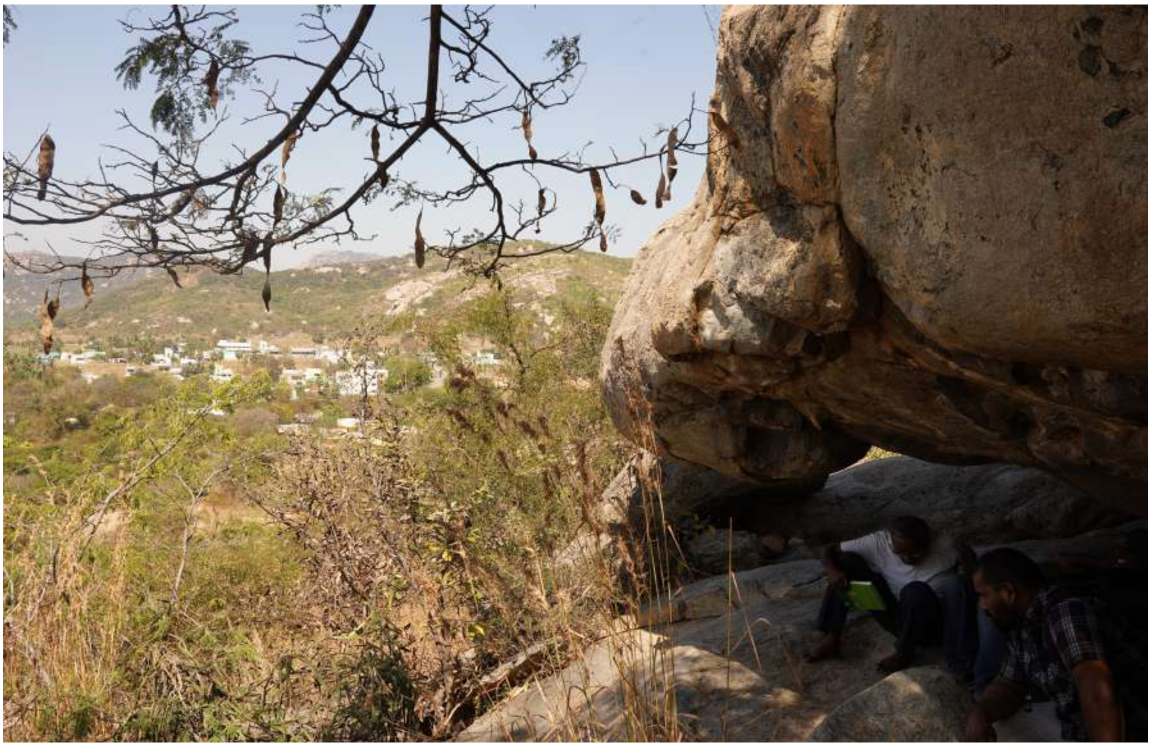


Fig. 4.38.3 General view of the rock shelter

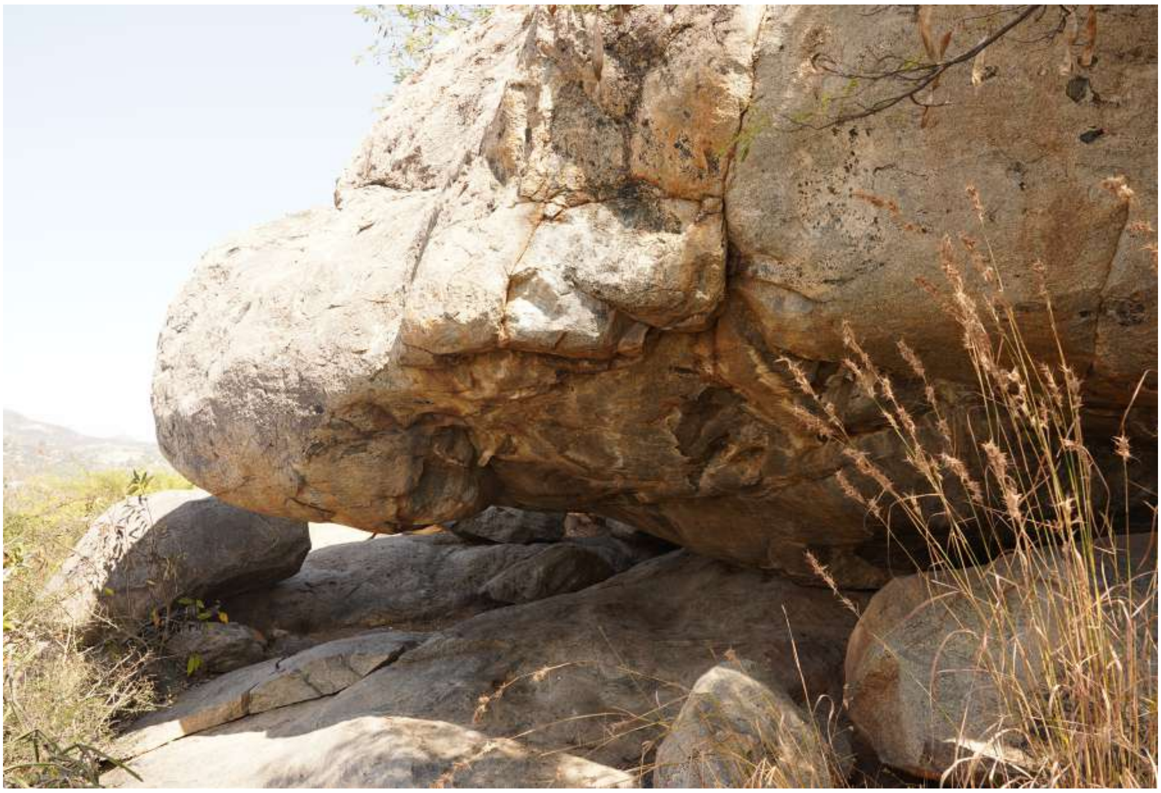


Fig. 4.38.4 General view of the rock shelter

Description

The rock shelter is not an ideal place for living, but it could have been used as a transit shelter to wait for the game animals. In this shelter, figures are painted in white. The human figures are arranged in three levels. The bottom level has four human figures with outstretched hands. The position, of their legs indicate, that they are engaged in a dance. In the middle level, five human figures are drawn in outline, which also seems to be in dance. On the top row, one human figure is drawn, also seems to be in a dance pose. Based on the colour and the brush strokes, one could presume that the paintings in this shelter were done by different artists at different times. This event may be illustrating the festivity. The strokes are bold. A few more strokes are found but mostly in faded condition, not able to identify the characters. The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of human figures, animal riders, etc.

Panel Description

This panel has paintings of human figures drawn with thick straight lines with a round head and raised hands. Few are in the supine position and the rest are in a dancing position. Totally, nine human figures are in this panel painted with white pigment (Fig. 4.38.5a-4.38.5b).

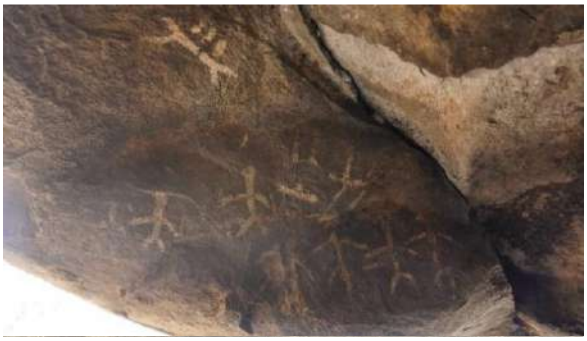


Fig. 4.38.5a Humans and animal rider

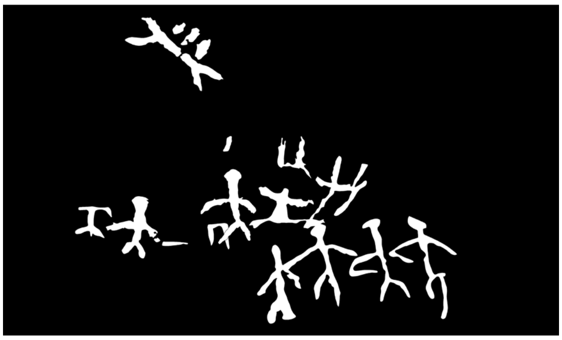


Fig. 4.38.5b Humans and animal rider

The human figure is painted with a straight thick line and both hands are raised upwards, legs are stretched apart. This human body looks like in a lying position (Fig. 4.38.6a-4.38.6b).

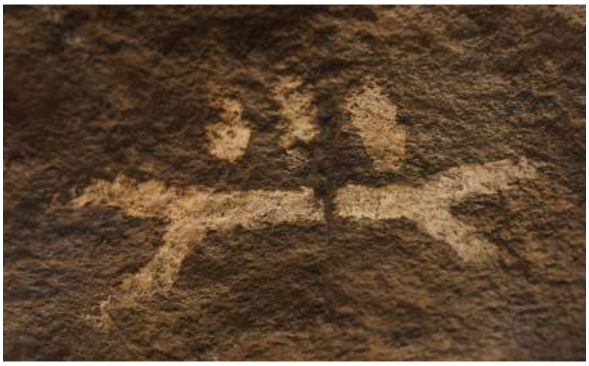


Fig. 4.38.6a Human

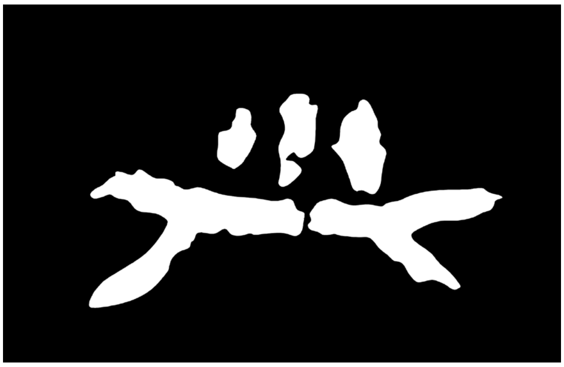


Fig. 4.38.6b Human

Three human figures are depicted in this frame in a dancing position. The hands are longer than the legs. These are painted with white pigment (Fig. 4.38.7a-4.38.7b).

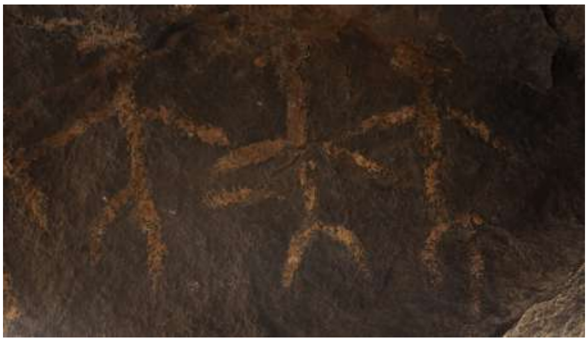


Fig. 4.38.7a Humans

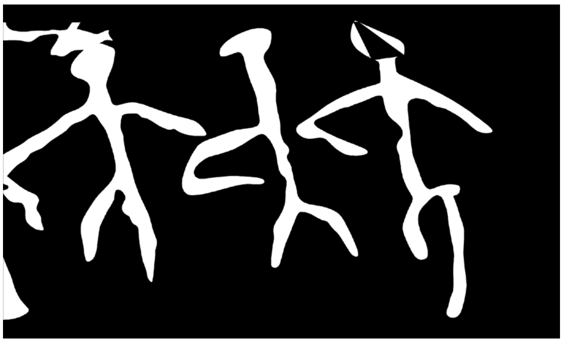


Fig. 4.38.7b Humans

Two human figures are painted in this panel with white pigment. One human figure is very clear with a round head and a thick straight-line neck. Another one is slightly faded off (Fig. 4.38.8a-4.38.8b).

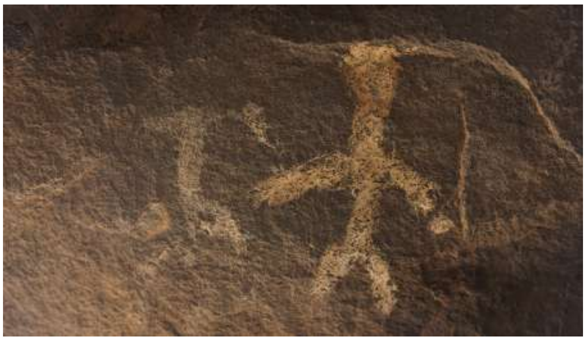


Fig. 4.38.8a Humans

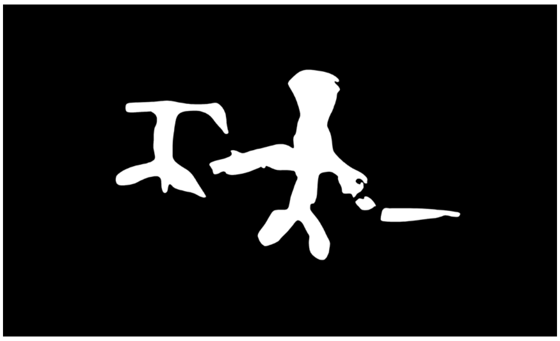


Fig. 4.38.8b Humans

Three human figures are depicted, two are very clear and one is in a faded condition. The left figure is in a standing position with a round head, long straight neck and body, with hands and legs. All are made with white pigment. The middle figure is not clear due to fading. The last one is a human figure in a supine position, which might be a dead position (Fig. 4.38.9a-4.38.9b).

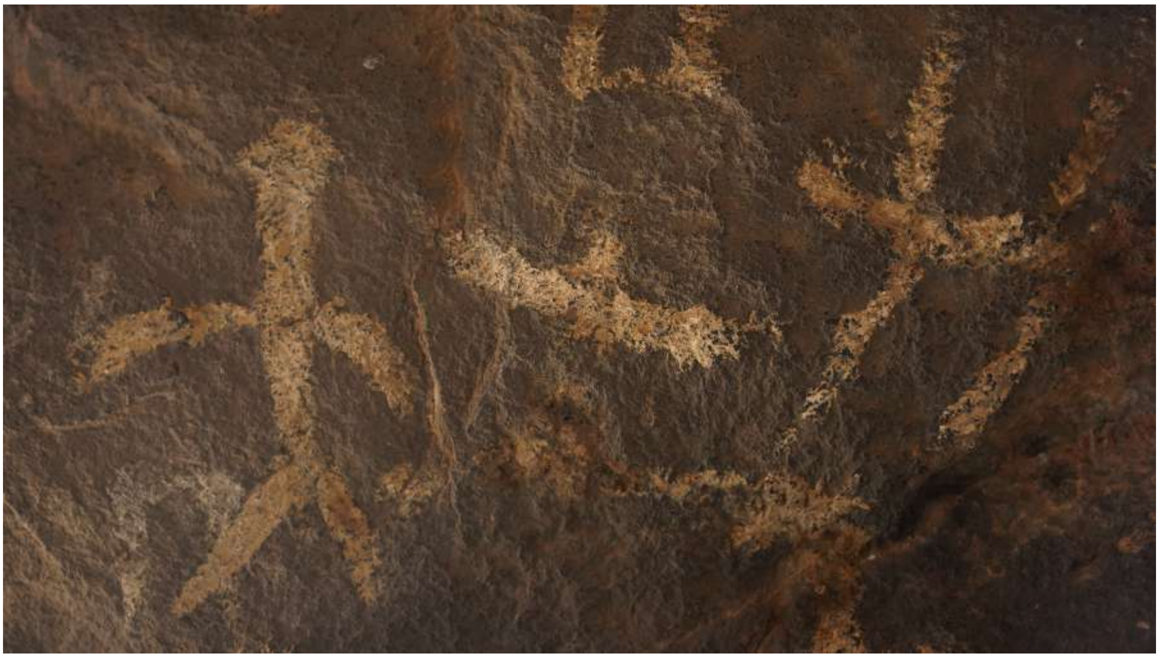


Fig. 4.38.9a Humans

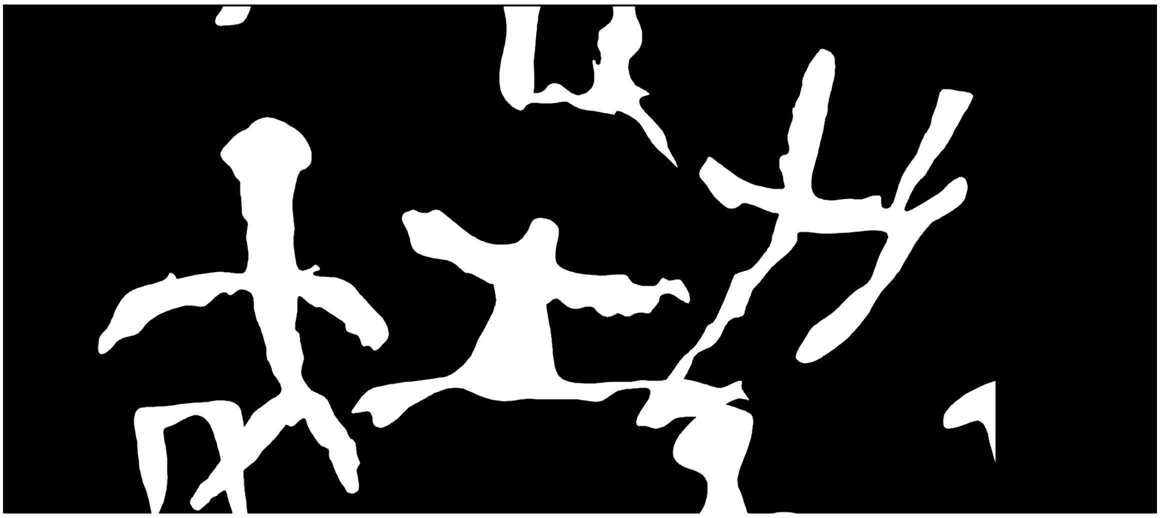


Fig. 4.38.9b Humans

The painting is faded. Only lines are visible in the panel. Three different figures are depicted here but not visible (Fig. 4.38.10a-4.38.10b).

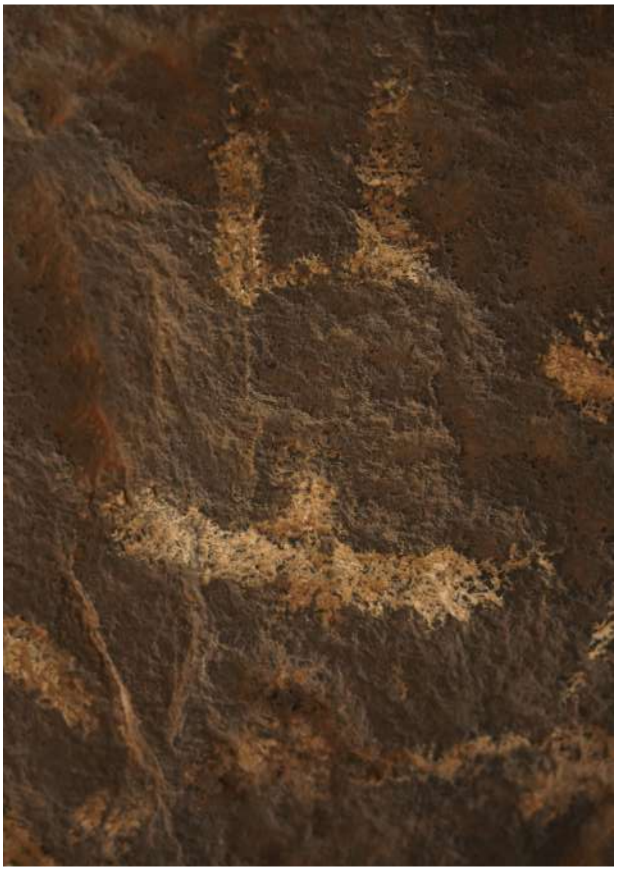


Fig. 4.38.10a Human

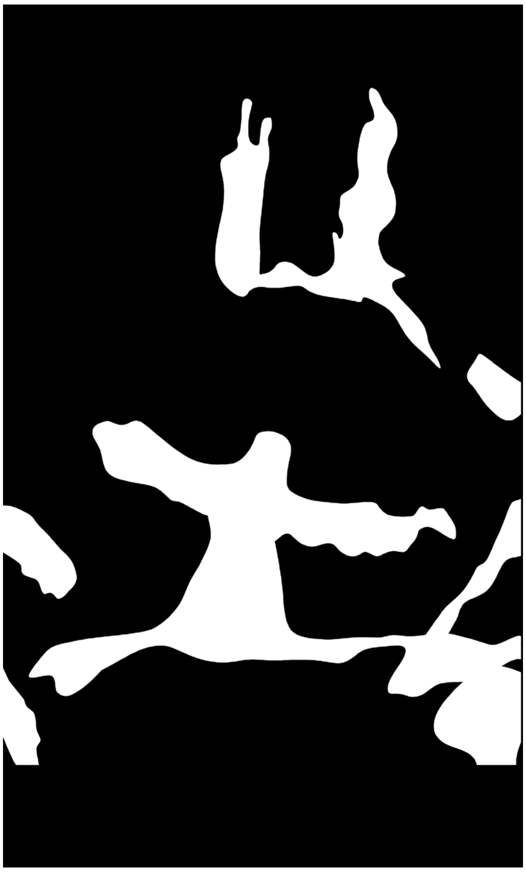


Fig. 4.38.10b Human

One human figure is drawn with thin lines in white pigment. The figure has a round head with a short neck and straight hands and two legs (Fig. 4.38.11a-4.38.11b).

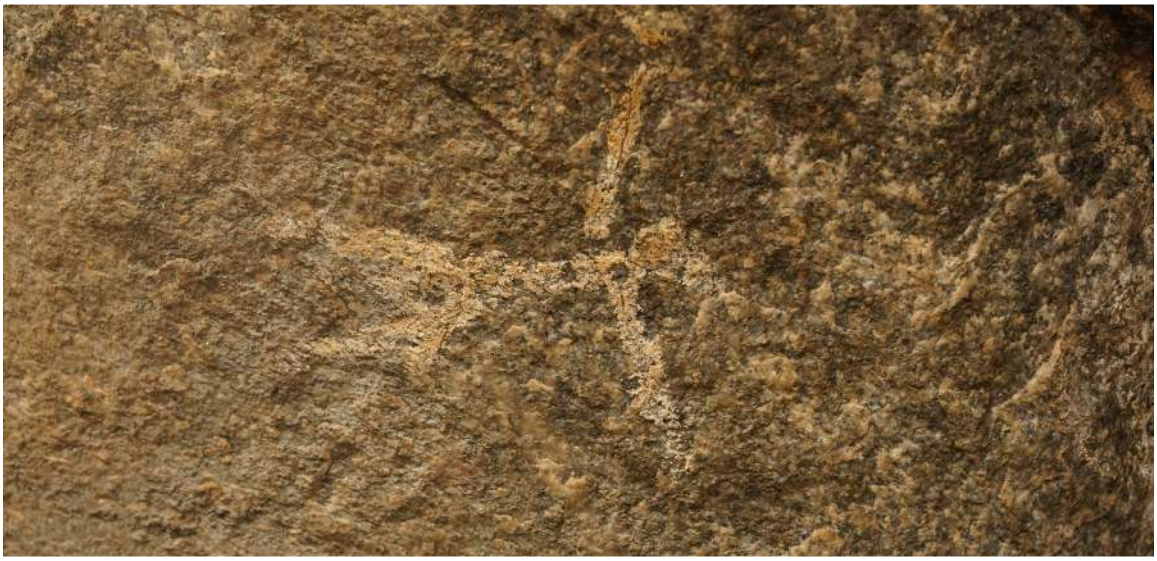


Fig. 4.38.11a Human

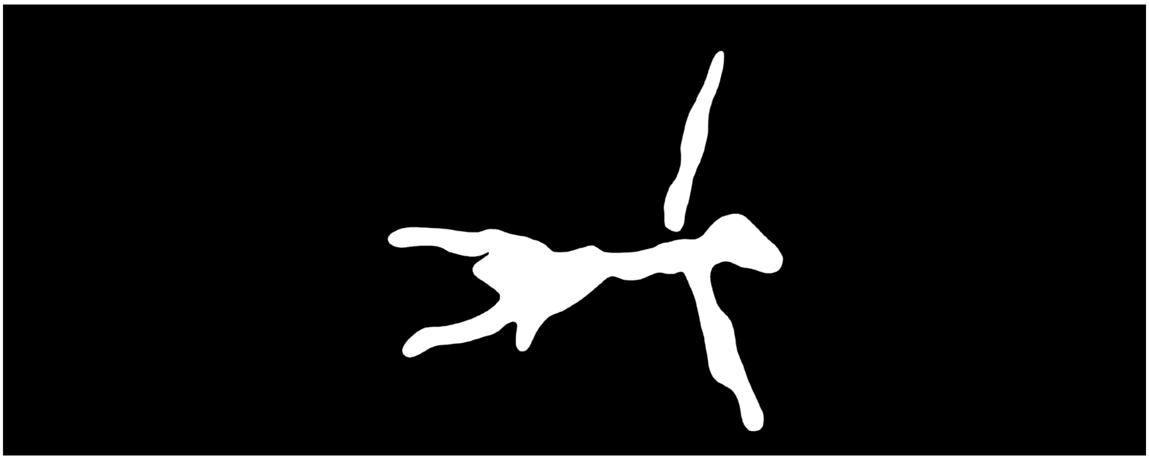


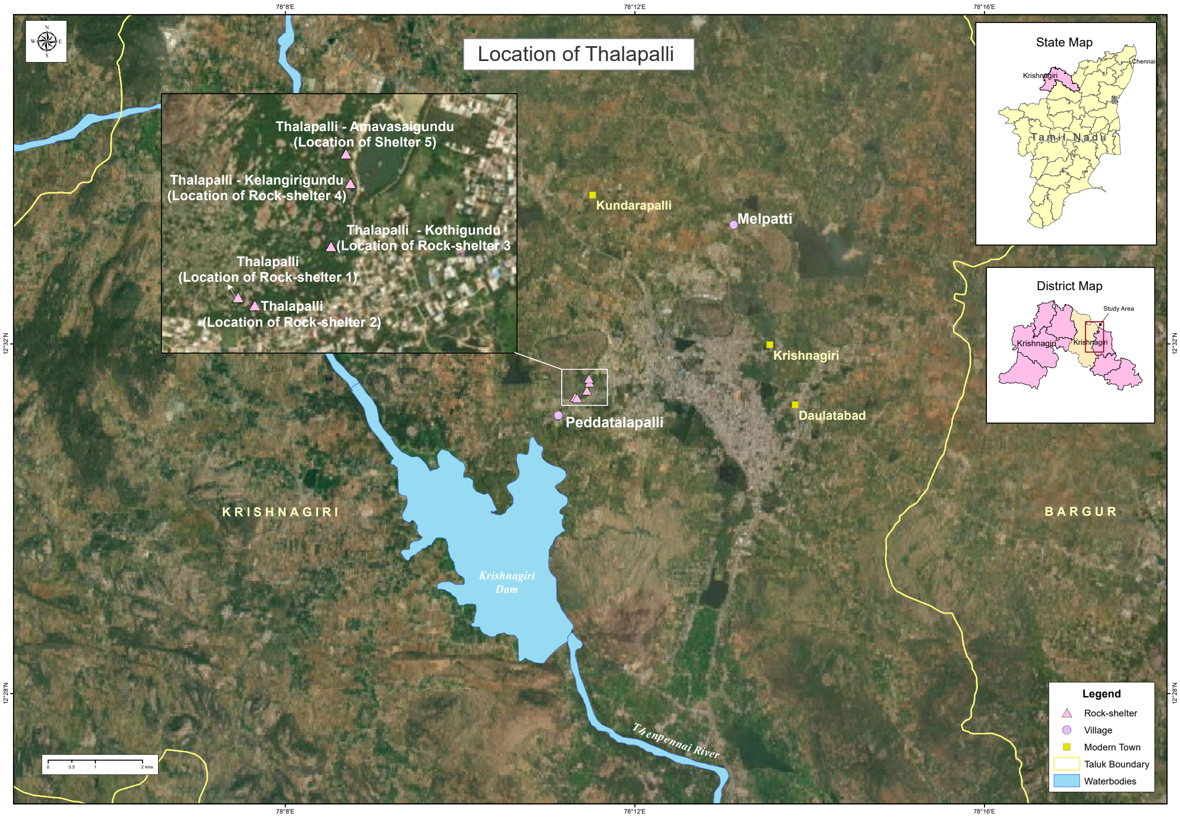
Fig. 4.38.11b Human

4.39. Thalapalli

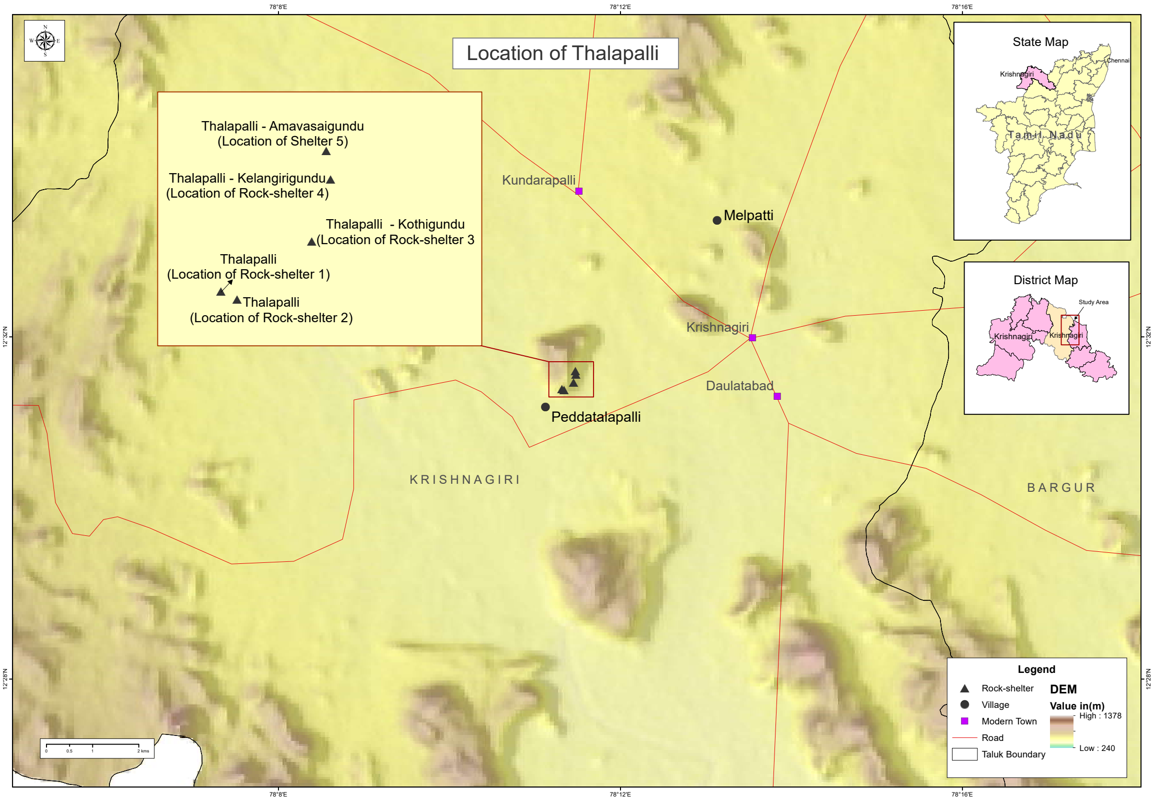
The village Thalapalli (12.51966 N; 78.18539 E) is located at a distance of 3 km to the west of Krishnagiri district (Maps 4.39.1-4.39.2). The rock paintings are in white pigment, found near the burial site. They are in four groups. The first three groups are noticed in the cavern locally called Kottikundu or kurangupara (Figs. 4.39.1-4.39.3). The fourth groups of paintings are seen on the Ammavasaikundu (Figs. 4.39.4-4.39.5).

Rock Shelter

The first rock shelter has a total length of painted surface of about 10.40 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 17.15 m. The height of the inclined surface is about 5 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2 m. The total painted area is about 10.20 sq m. The shelter no.2 is having a total length of about 4.30 m with the painted area of 60x50 cm. The shelter no.3 is having a total length of about 2.15 m and the painted area is 2x1.50 m. The shelter no.4 is having a total length of about 19.50 m and the painted area covers 1.40x1.20 m. The shelter no.5 is having a total length of 4 m with a painted area of 1.30x50 cm.


Location of Thalapalli
Thalapalli - Amavasaigundu (Location of Shelter 5)
Thalapalli - Kelangirigundu (Location of Rock-shelter 4)
Thalapalli - Kothigundu (Location of Rock-shelter 3
Thalapalli (Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Thalapalli (Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Kundarapalli
Melpatti
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Peddatalapalli
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Krishnagiri Dam
Thenpennai River
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies

Map 4.39.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Thalapalli
Thalapalli - Amavasaigundu (Location of Shelter 5)
Thalapalli - Kelangirigundu (Location of Rock-shelter 4)
Thalapalli - Kothigundu (Location of Rock-shelter 3
Thalapalli (Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Thalapalli (Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Kundarapalli
Melpatti
Krishnagiri
Daulatabad
Peddatalapalli
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.39.2 Location of the rock shelter

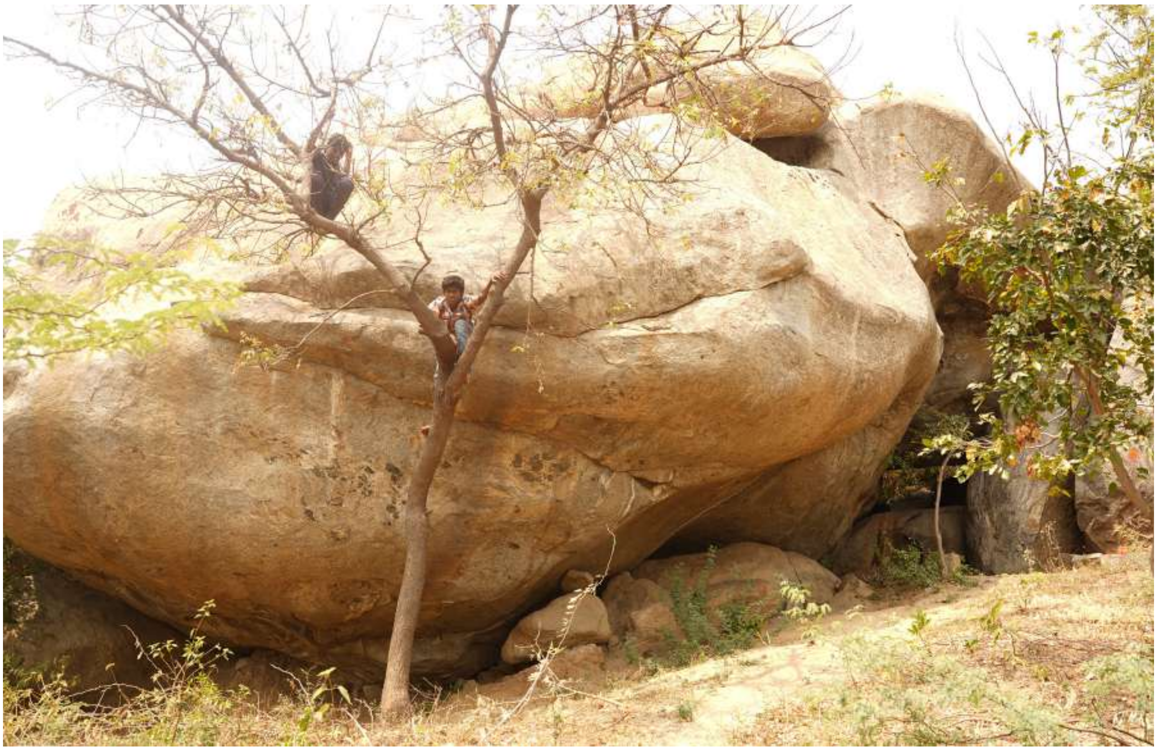


Fig. 4.39.1 General view of the rock shelter

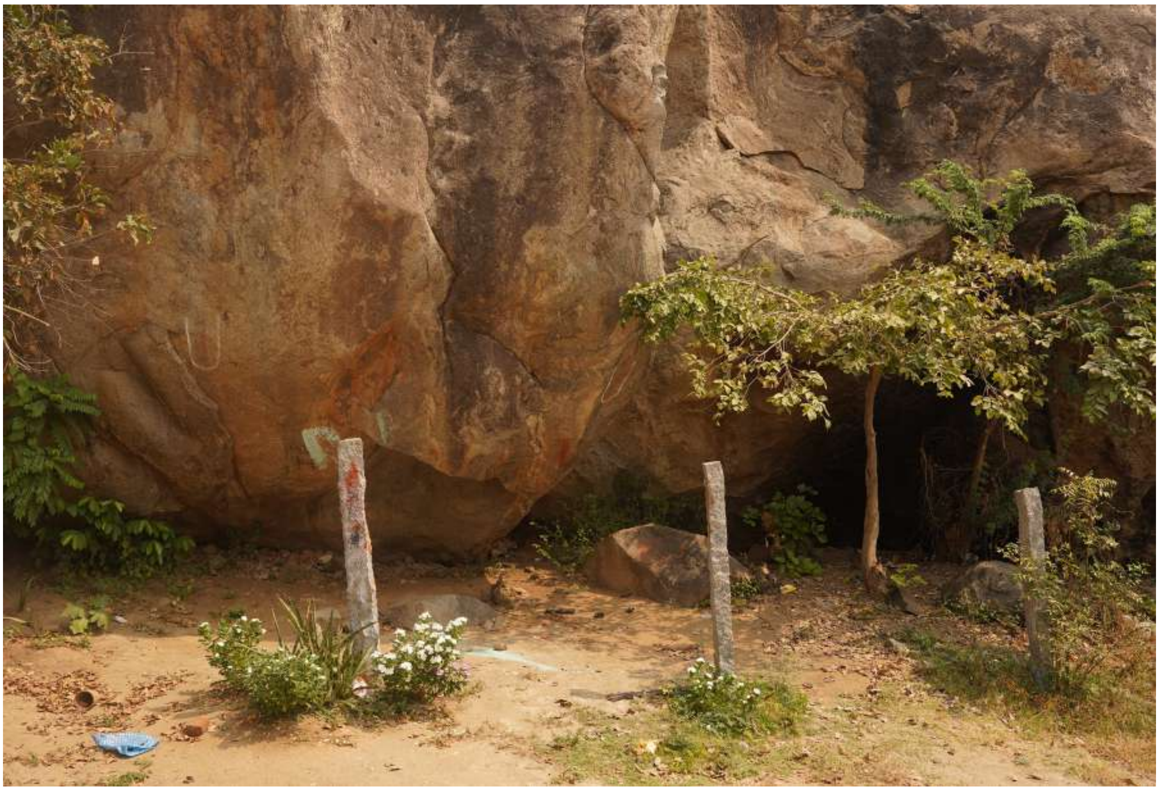


Fig. 4.39.2 General view of the rock shelter

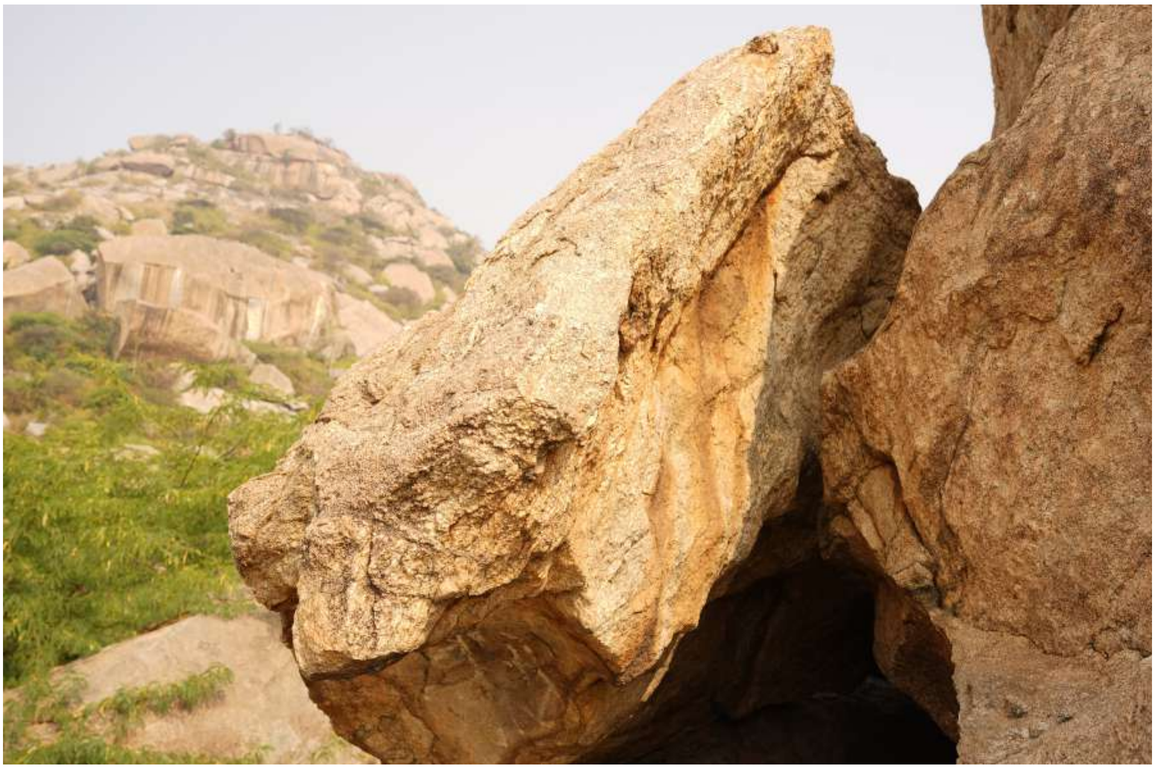


Fig. 4.39.3 General view of the rock shelter

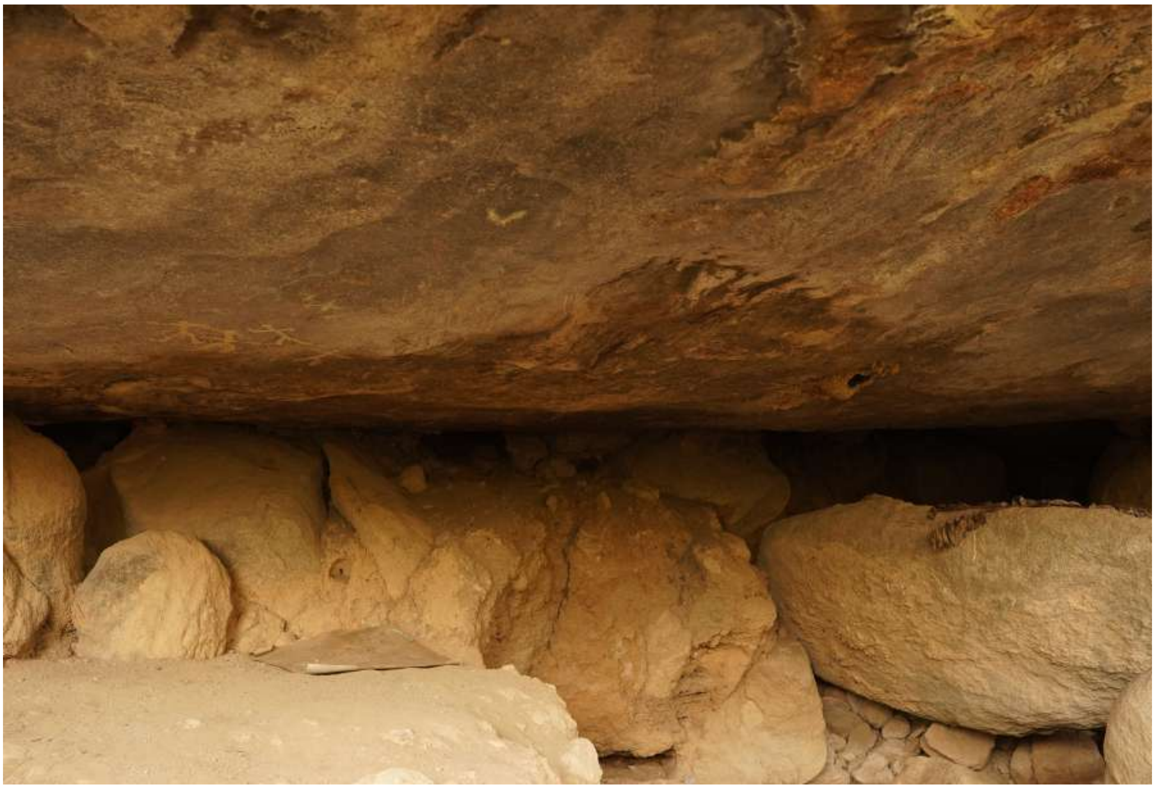


Fig. 4.39.4 General view of the rock shelter

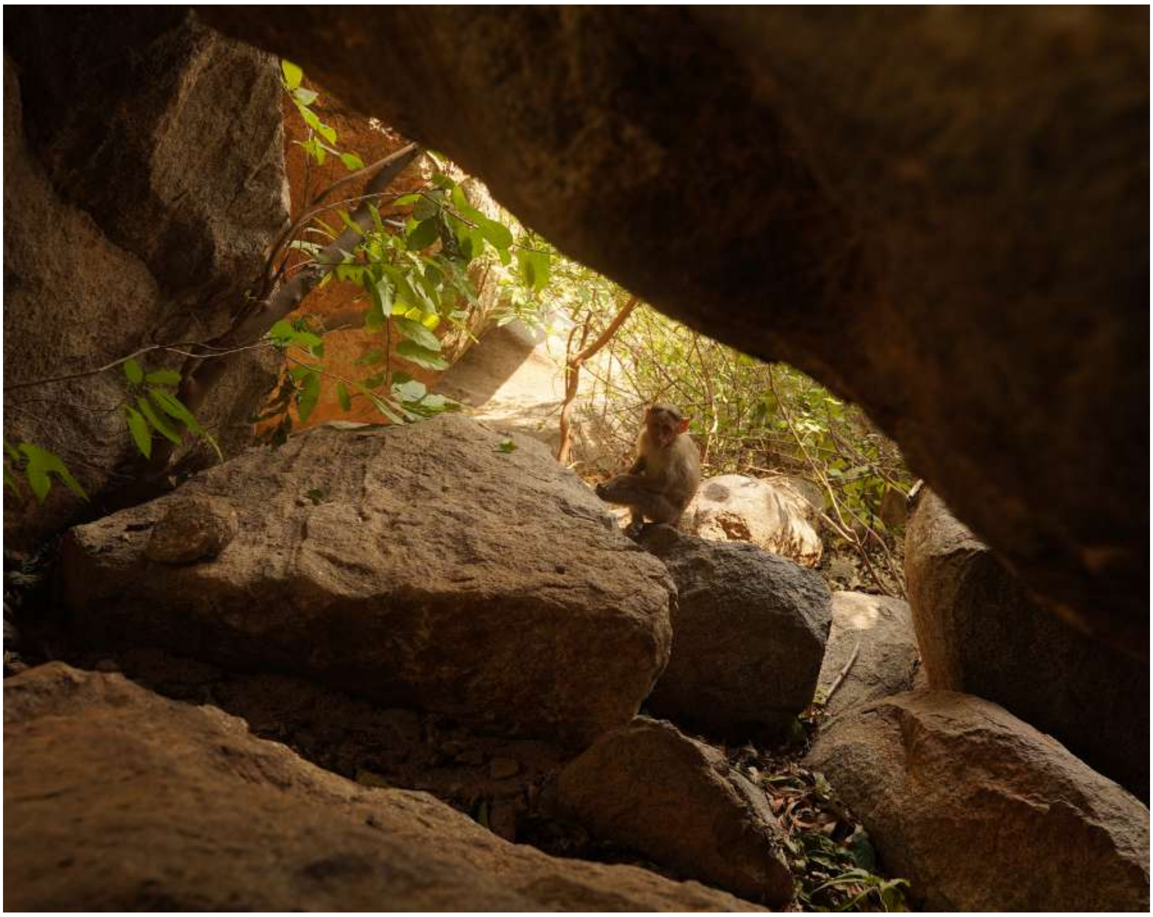


Fig. 4.39.5 General view of the rock shelter

Description

Rock paintings have been found at five places. They are located in Shelter-1 near near Muneeshwaran temple, Shelter-2 Bedha Thalapalli near *Pulikuthipattan-kal* behind Anjaneyar-koil, Shelter-3 Kothigundu, Shelter-4 Kelangirigundu, and Shelter-5 Amavasaigundu. The paintings are mostly made with white pigment. Depictions of human figures, rider figures, birds and geometrical symbols, along with scenes of battle/fight and dancing are evident.

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of four human figures, a boat and fish, bird, swastika and trident like signs could be seen in the Thalapalli paintings.

Panel Description

Shelter-1

The figure is showing a celebration of people. In the rock art panel, a group of people are performing the dance in front of their decorated house. The house is decorated with dot marks all around. The people are painted in the X-ray method as well colouring method. All the people are decorated with a head crown like an object. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.6a-4.39.6b).

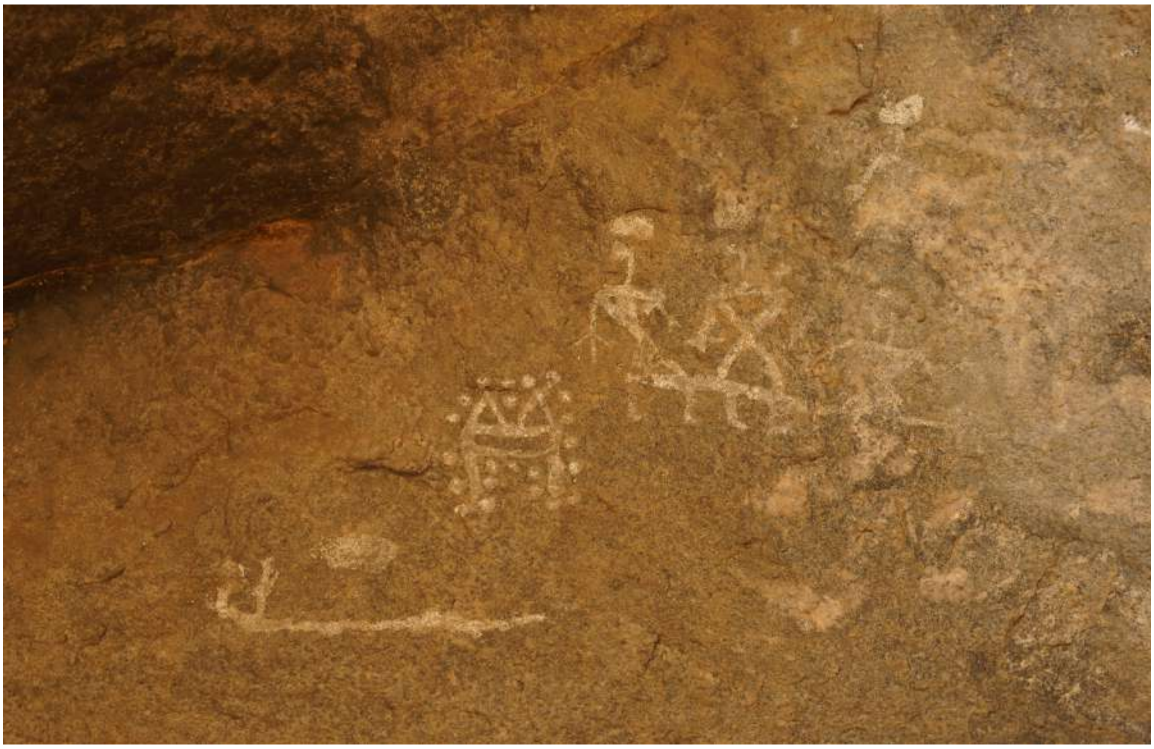


Fig. 4.39.6a Four humans

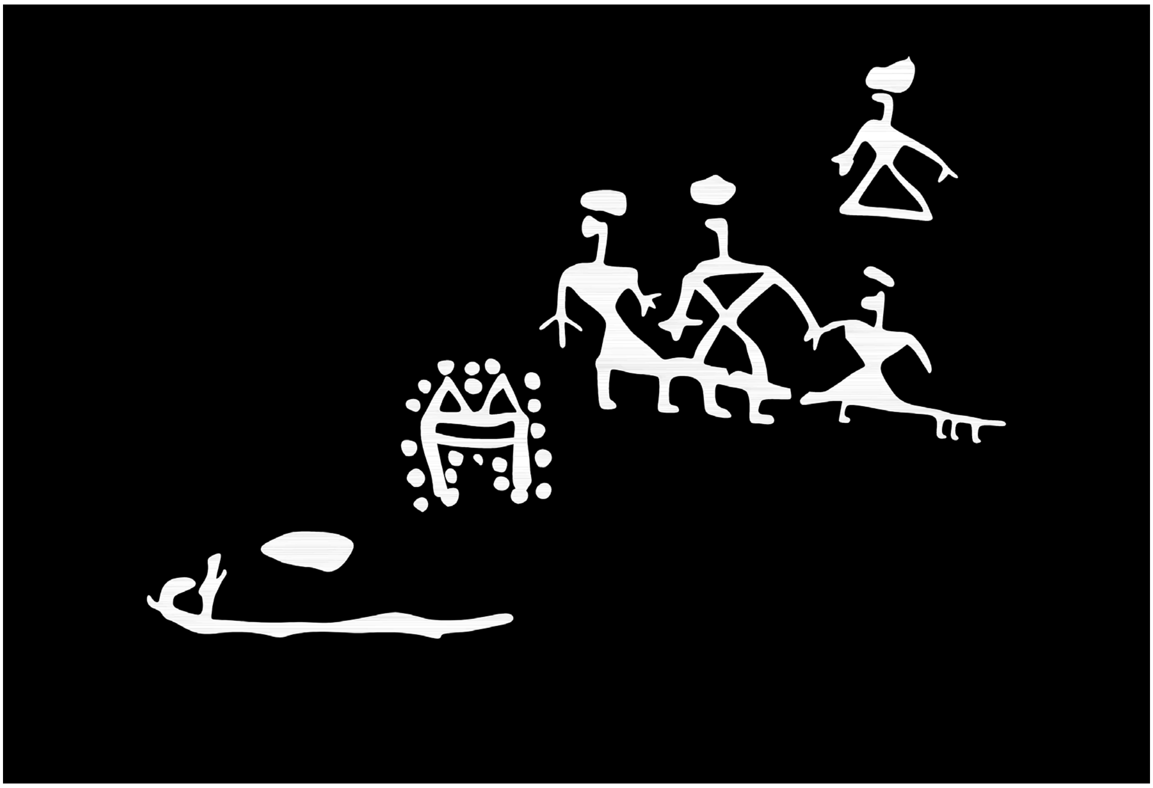


Fig. 4.39.6b Four humans

The figure is showing an ithyphallic human figure. The man is kneeling down and his right hand is raised up and his left hand is held horizontal. His body is muscular and his legs are very short. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.7a-4.39.7b).

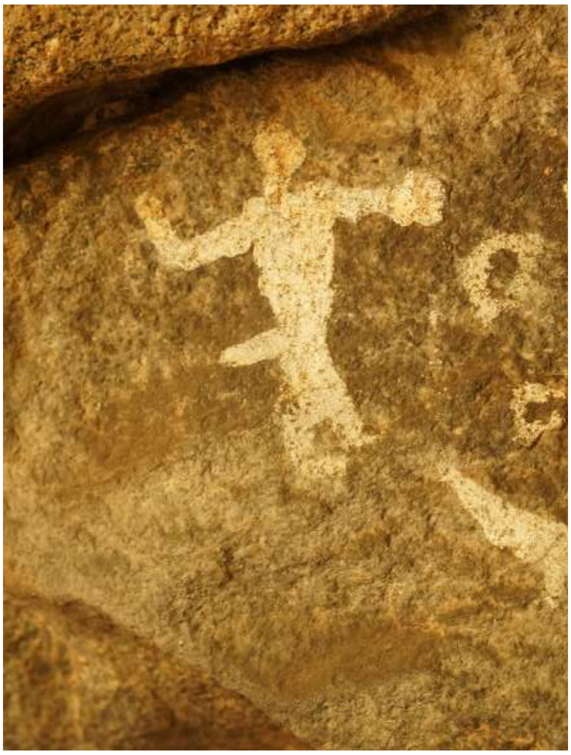


Fig. 4.39.7a Human

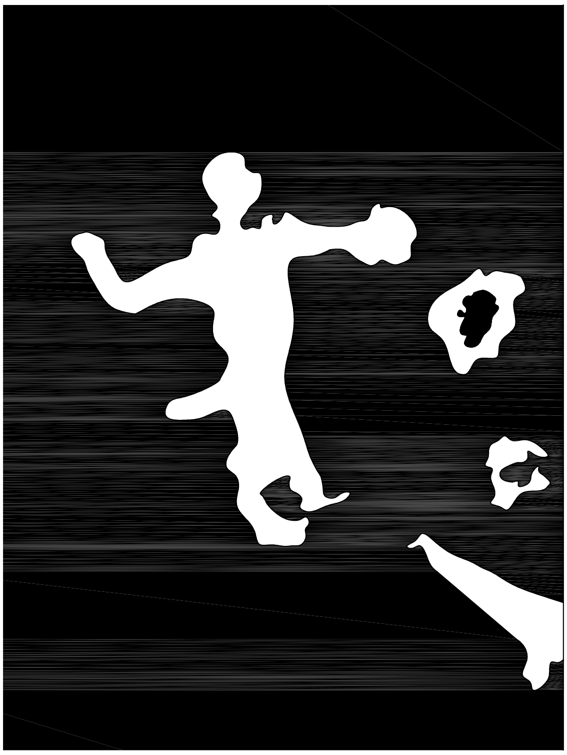


Fig. 4.39.7b Human

The figure shows a boat and a human. The paintings on the right side is a boat like sign and two men are standing over it. On the right side, a man is standing and his hands are free. In between the boat and the man, an unidentified object is painted. The colour of the paintings is white (Fig. 4.39.8a-4.39.8b).

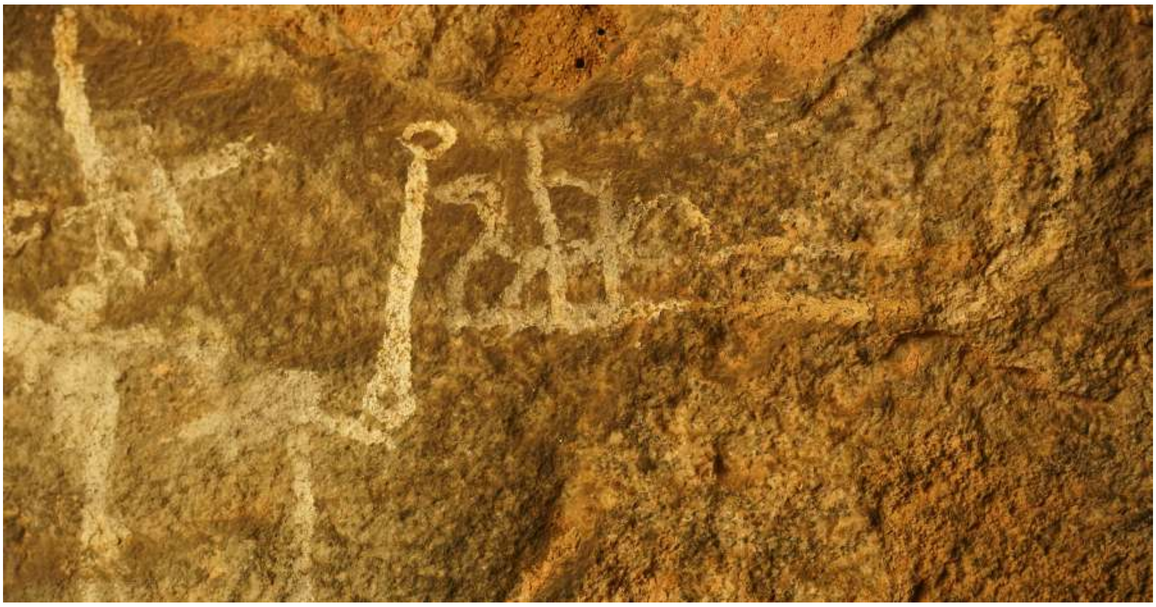


Fig. 4.39.8a Boat like sign

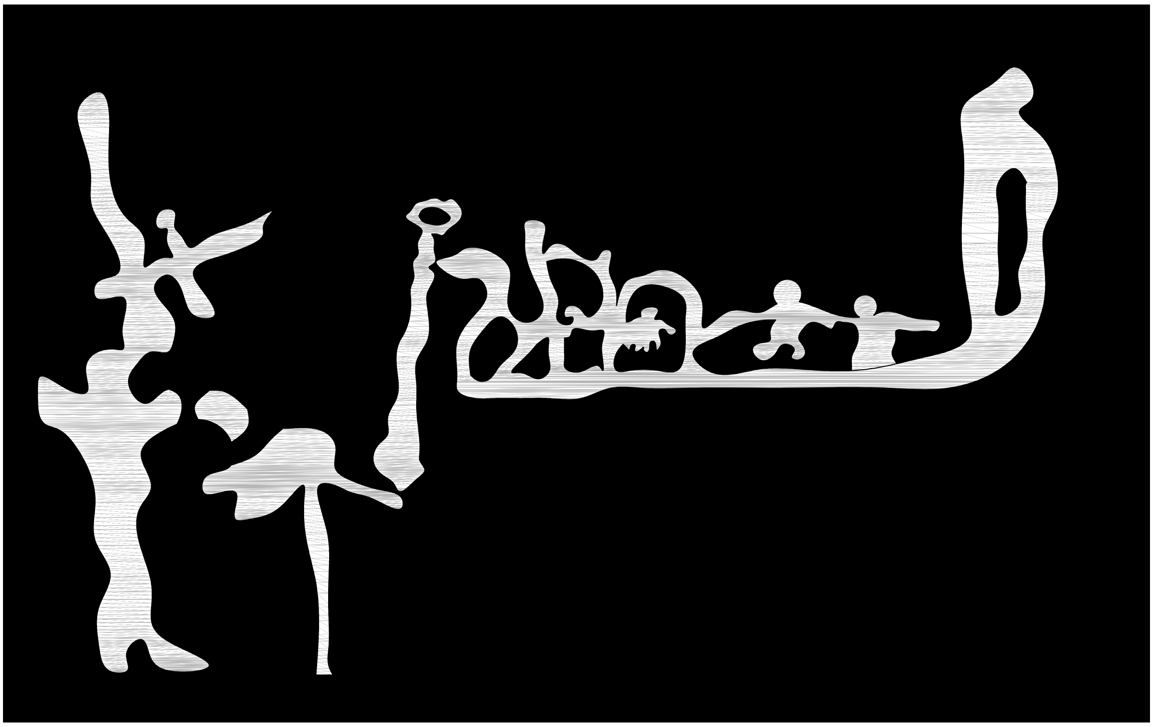


Fig. 4.39.8b *Boat like sign*

The figure shows a fish in outline. It is made in a thick stroke of white colour. It is facing right (Fig. 4.39.9a-4.39.9b).

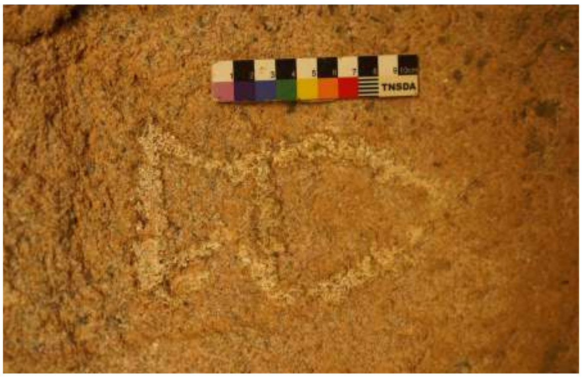


Fig. 4.39.9a *Fish like sign*

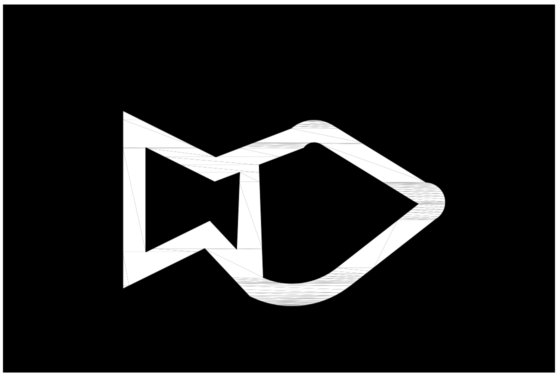


Fig. 4.39.9b *Fish like sign*

Shelter-2

The figure shows the scene of four hunters. The hunter riding an animal is drawn on the right side of the painted area. The animal is shown in a small form and the human palms are in a large size. In the middle, two hunters are painted. Both of them are a small size which could indicate the distance where they stand. On the left side, a hunter is standing and it's ithyphallic in nature. A triangle having a box on its top is painted on the extreme left. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.10a-4.39.10b).

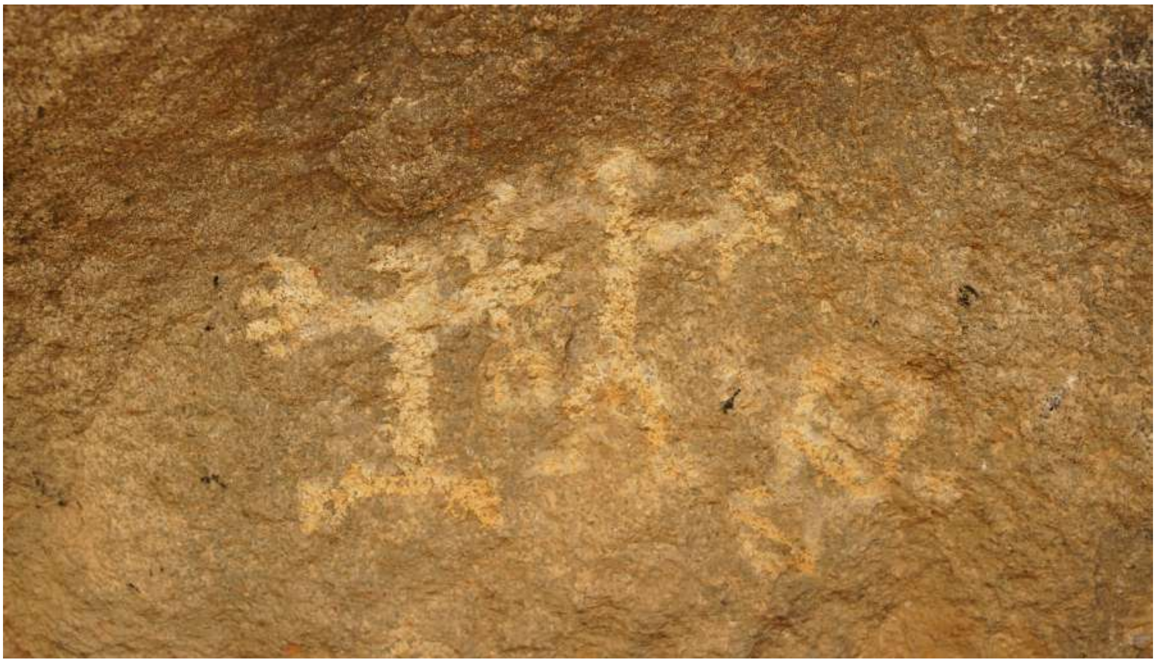


Fig. 4.39.10a Humans

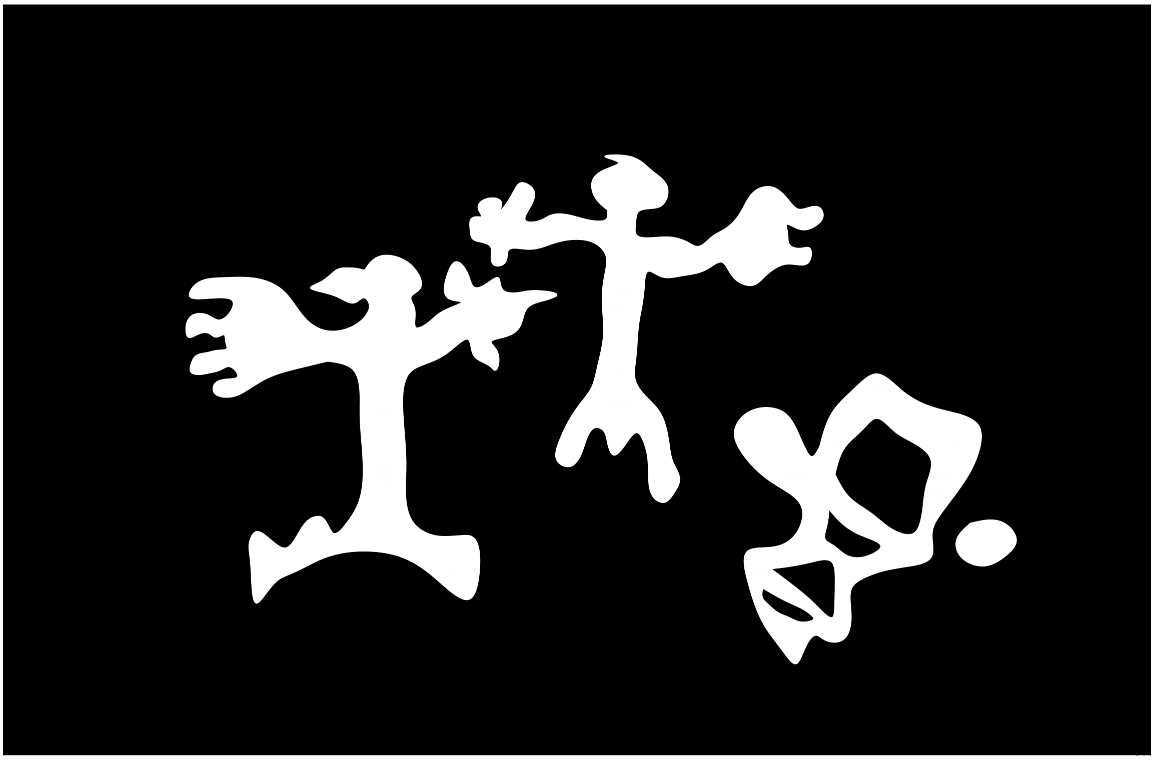


Fig. 4.39.10b Humans

Shelter-3

The figure shows an ithyphallic hunter. The head looks like a bird. The hands are looking like wings. These all are suggesting a mythical animal. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.11a-4.39.11b).

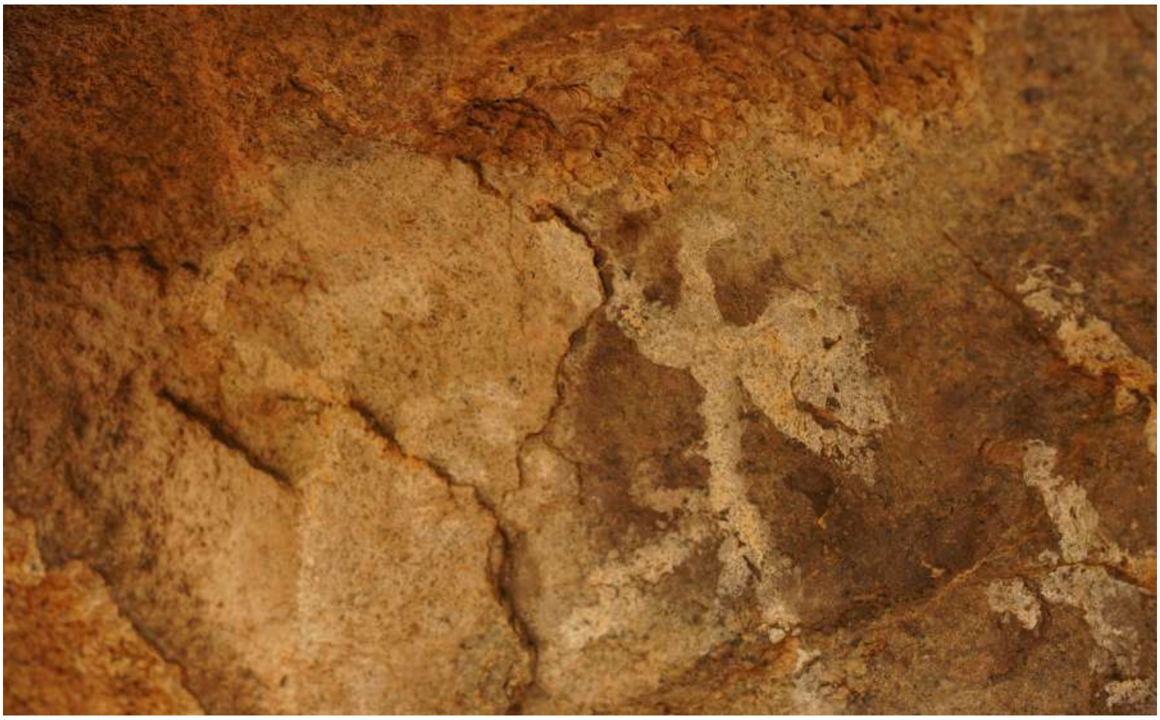


Fig. 4.39.11a Human

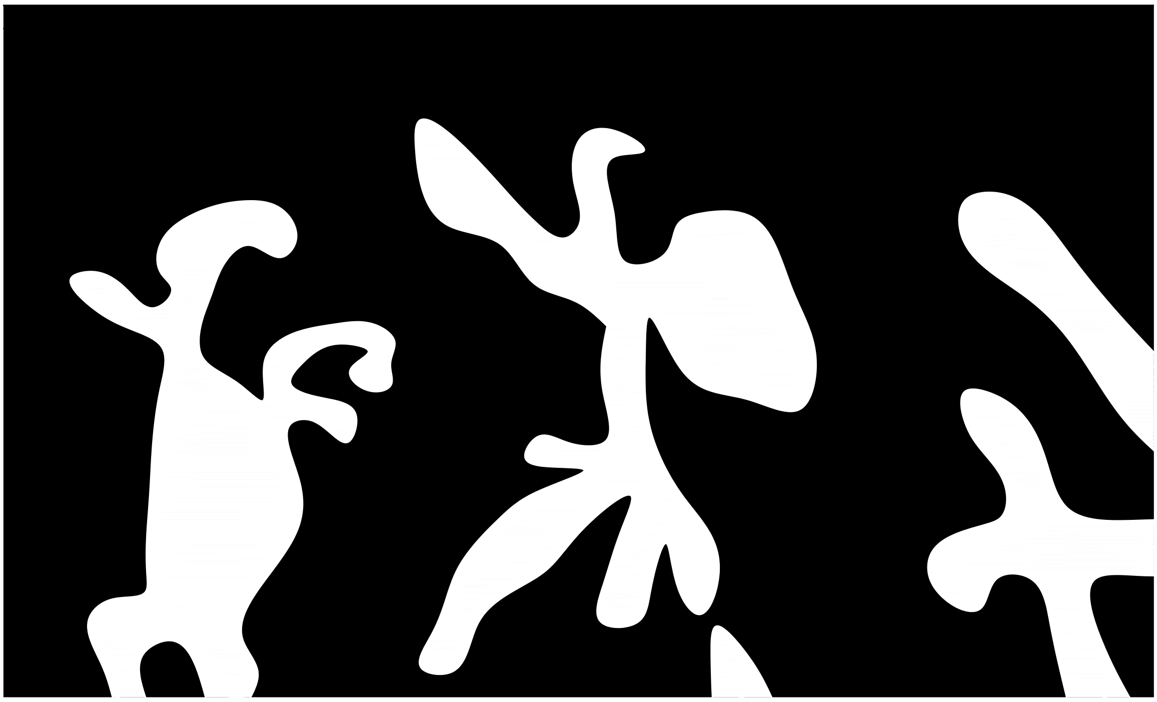


Fig. 4.39.11b Human

The figure shows the scene of a hunter, an animal and a conch like sign. A hunter is holding a weapon in his right hand. Above him, a conch and a bird are painted in the vertical form. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.12a-4.39.12b).

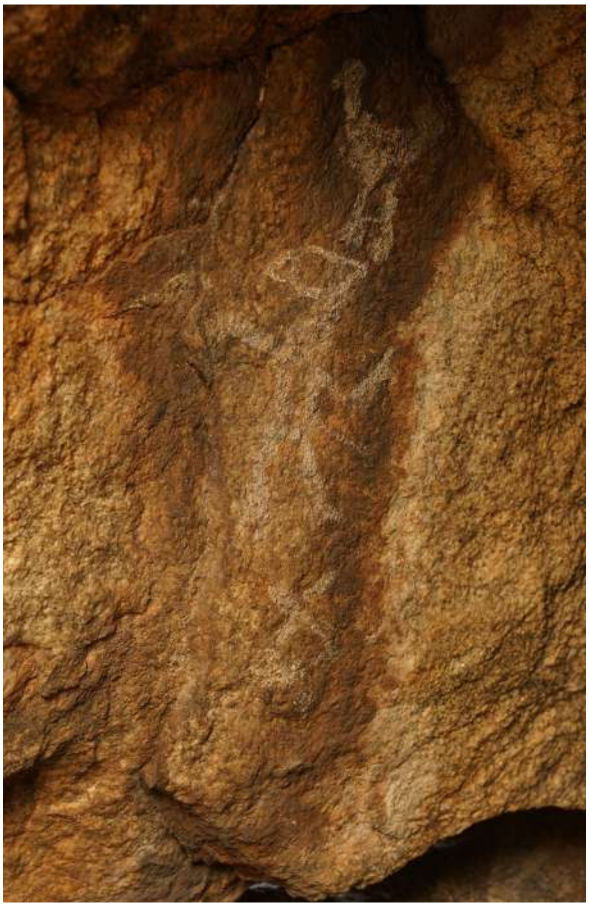


Fig. 4.39.12a *Human, bird and fish like sign*

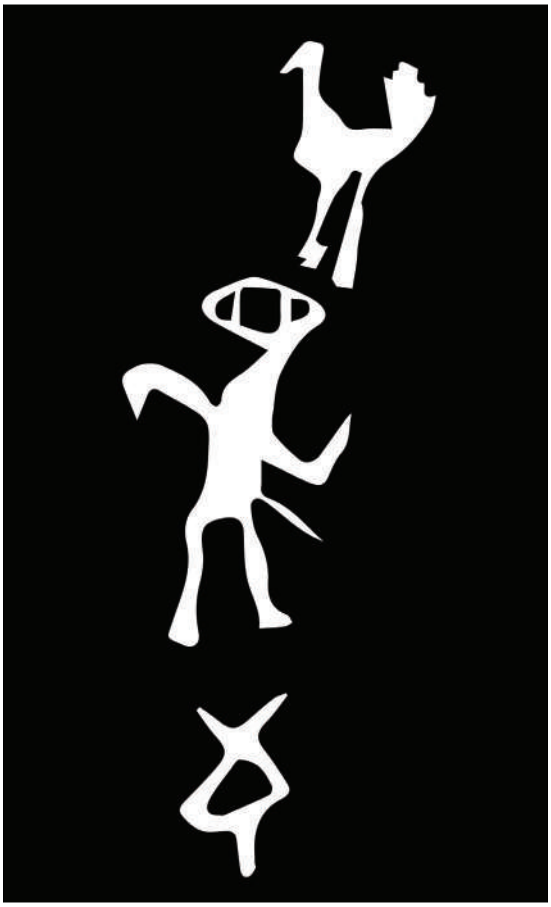


Fig. 4.39.12b *Human, bird and fish like sign*

Shelter-4

The figure shows a dancing man. The man whose hands are outstretched appears to be moving. All are suggesting the dancing form. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.13a-4.39.13b).

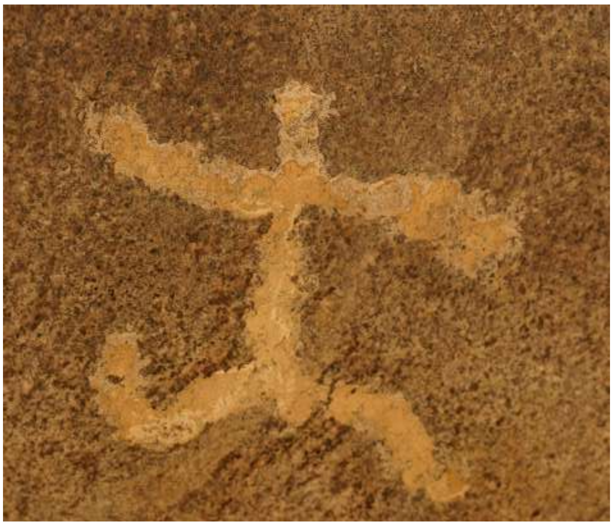


Fig. 4.39.13a *Human*

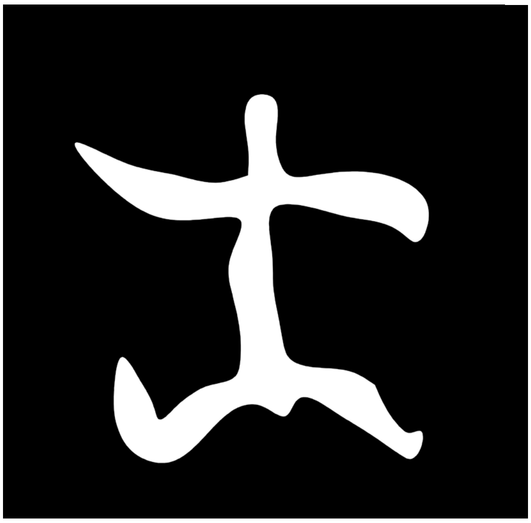


Fig. 4.39.13b *Human*

The figure is shown in a group. The people are in a standing/dancing posture. Their hands are stretched out. Among the four, two could be male, identified based on ithyphallic features. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.14a-4.39.14b).

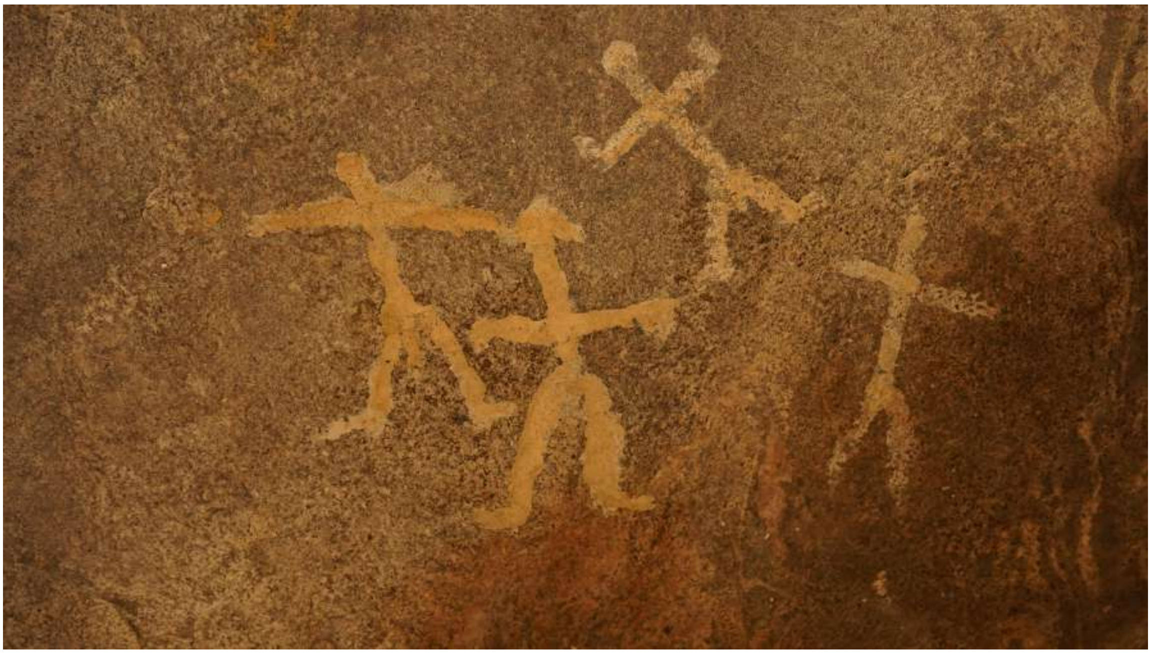


Fig. 4.39.14a Humans

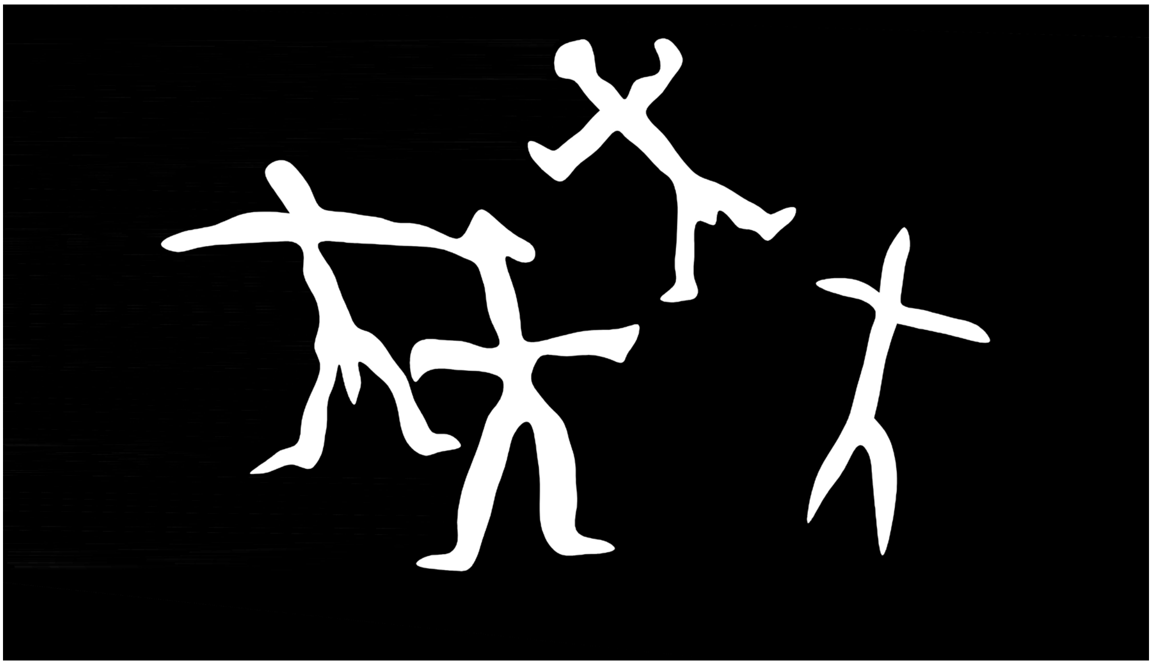


Fig. 4.39.14b Humans

The figure is depicted in a *swastika.* The *swastika* is in a thick form of drawing. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.15a-4.39.15b).

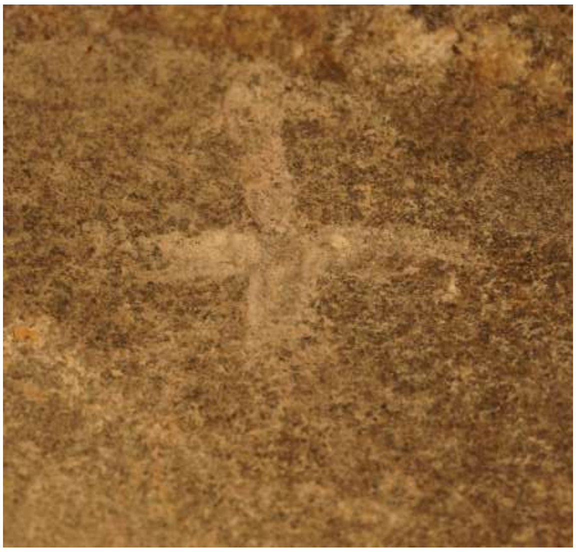


Fig. 4.39.15a "Swastika" like sign

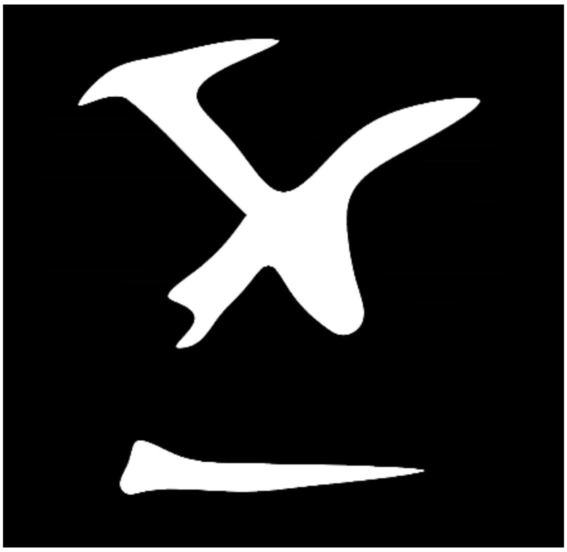


Fig. 4.39.15b "Swastika" like sign

Shelter-5

The figure comprises a dancing scene of a standing human figure. All the fingers are thin and long in size. His chest portion is narrow. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.16a-4.39.16b).

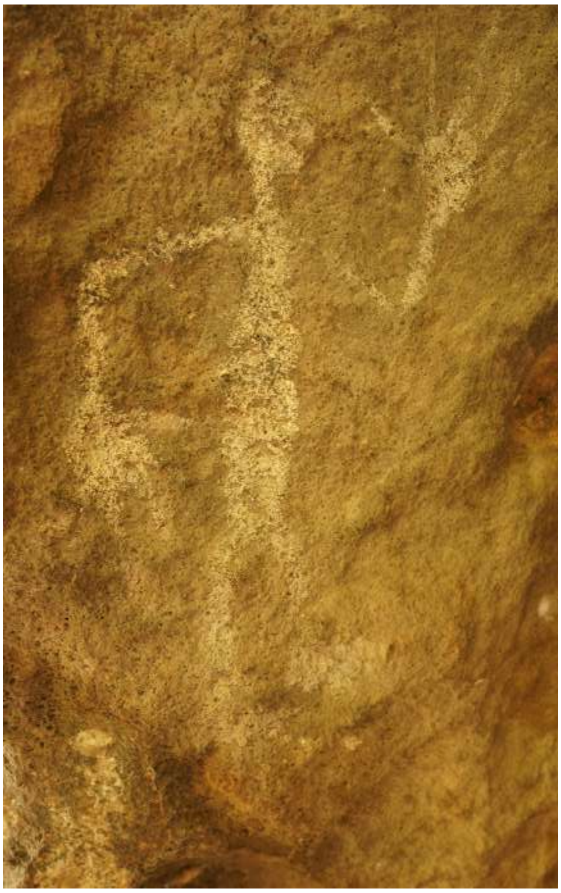


Fig. 4.39.16a Human

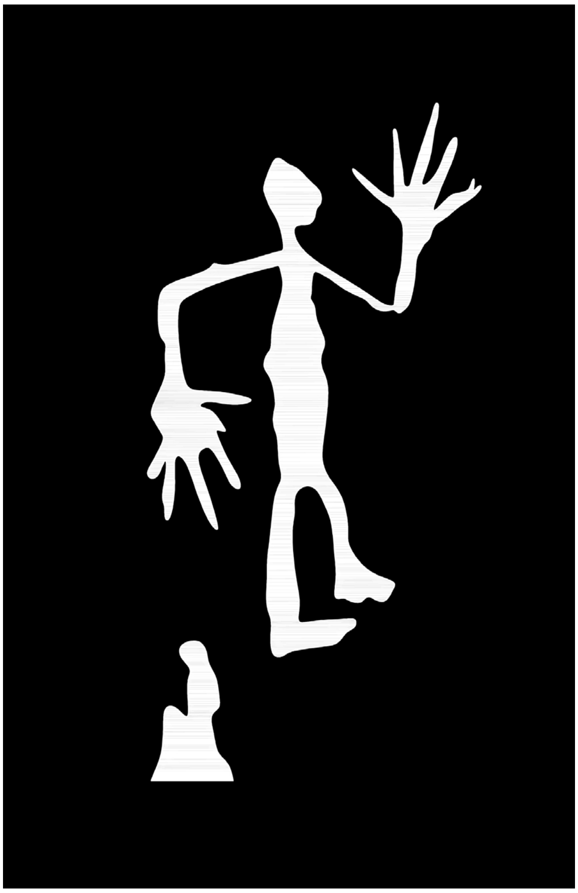


Fig. 4.39.16b Human

The figure has a drawing of the trident. The trident is having a thick coating. The colour of the painting is white (Fig. 4.39.17a-4.39.17b).

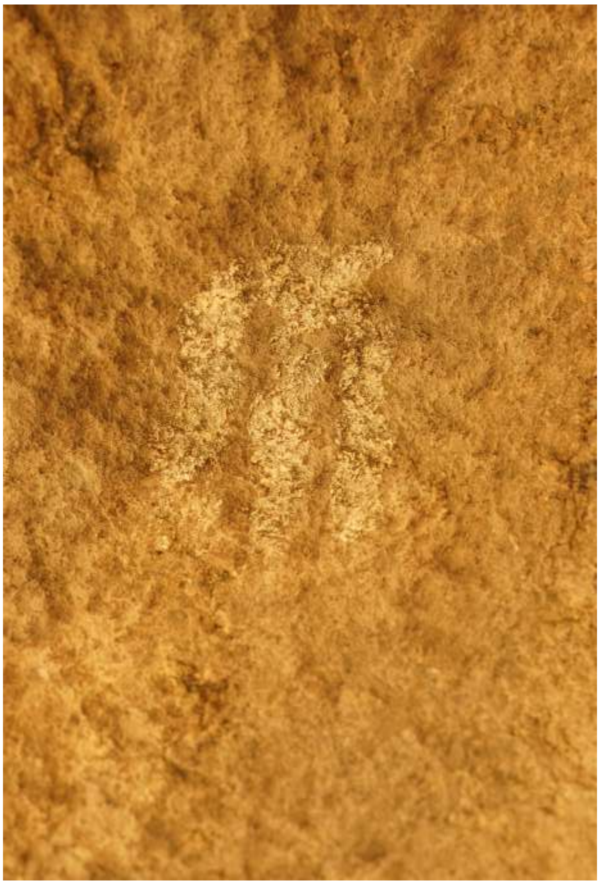


Fig. 4.39.17a Trident like sign

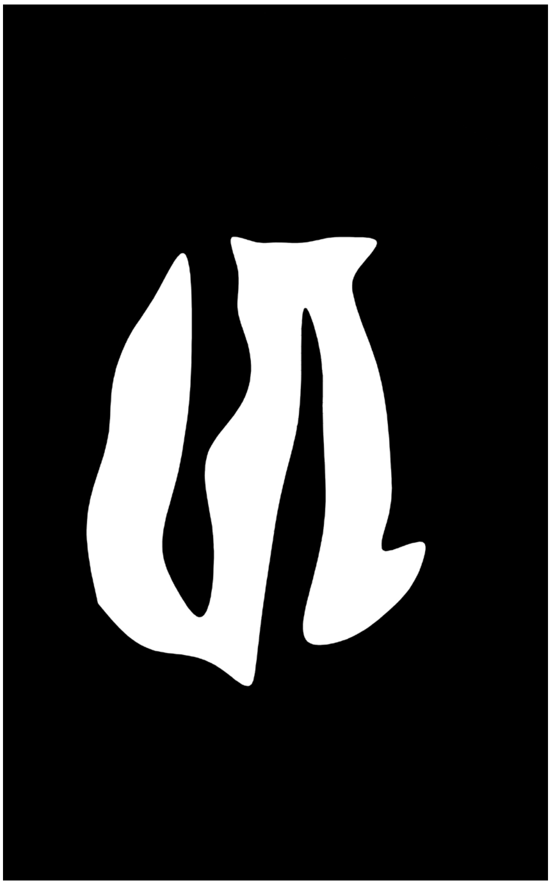


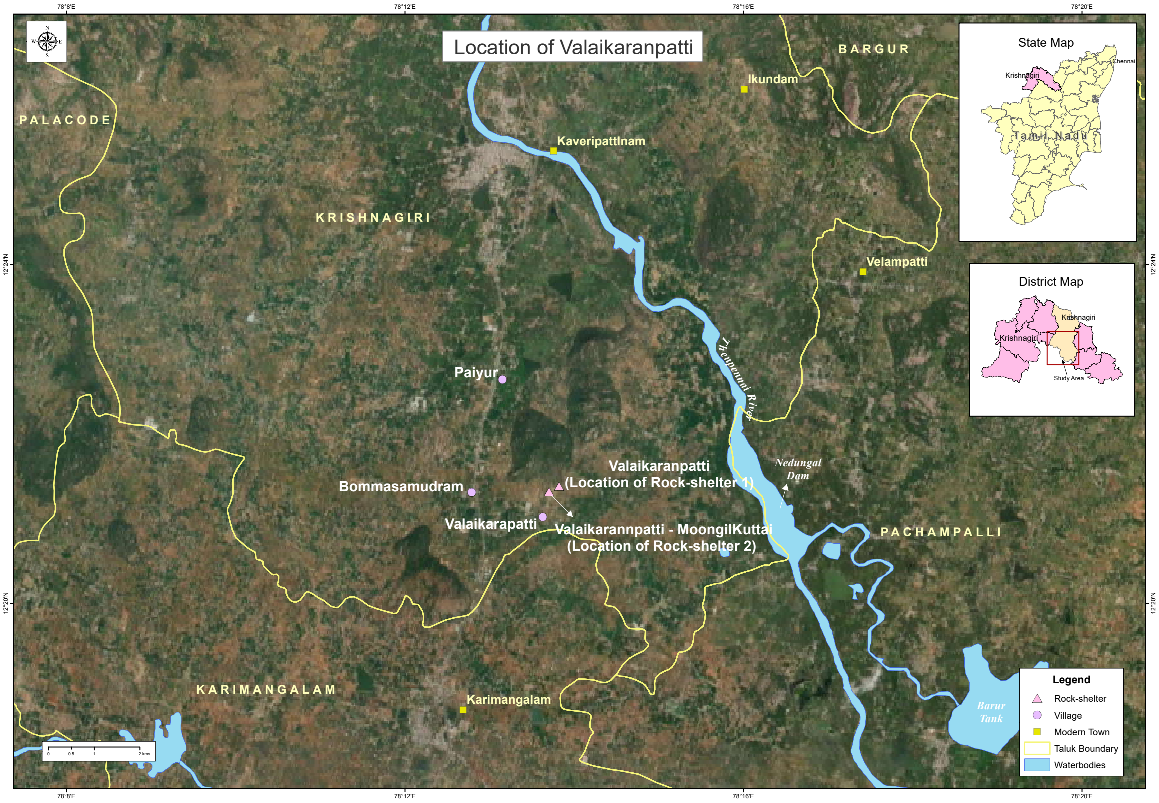
Fig. 4.39.17b Trident like sign

4.40. Valaikaranpatti

The site of Valaikaranpatti (12.35031 N; 78.22711 E) is a part of Karagur village in Krishnagiri taluk of the same district (Maps 4.40.1-4.40.2). The hamlet lies about 8 km to the south of Kaveripattinam, 2 km to the east of Sappanipatti and 3 km to the north of Paiyur. The village is also called Valayalkaranpatti. There are 3 rock shelters with paintings in white. The shelters are referred to as kuli-erudhu-kugai (Figs. 4.40.1-4.40.3). The majority of the paintings are human figures, and abstract symbols, geometric and non-geometric.

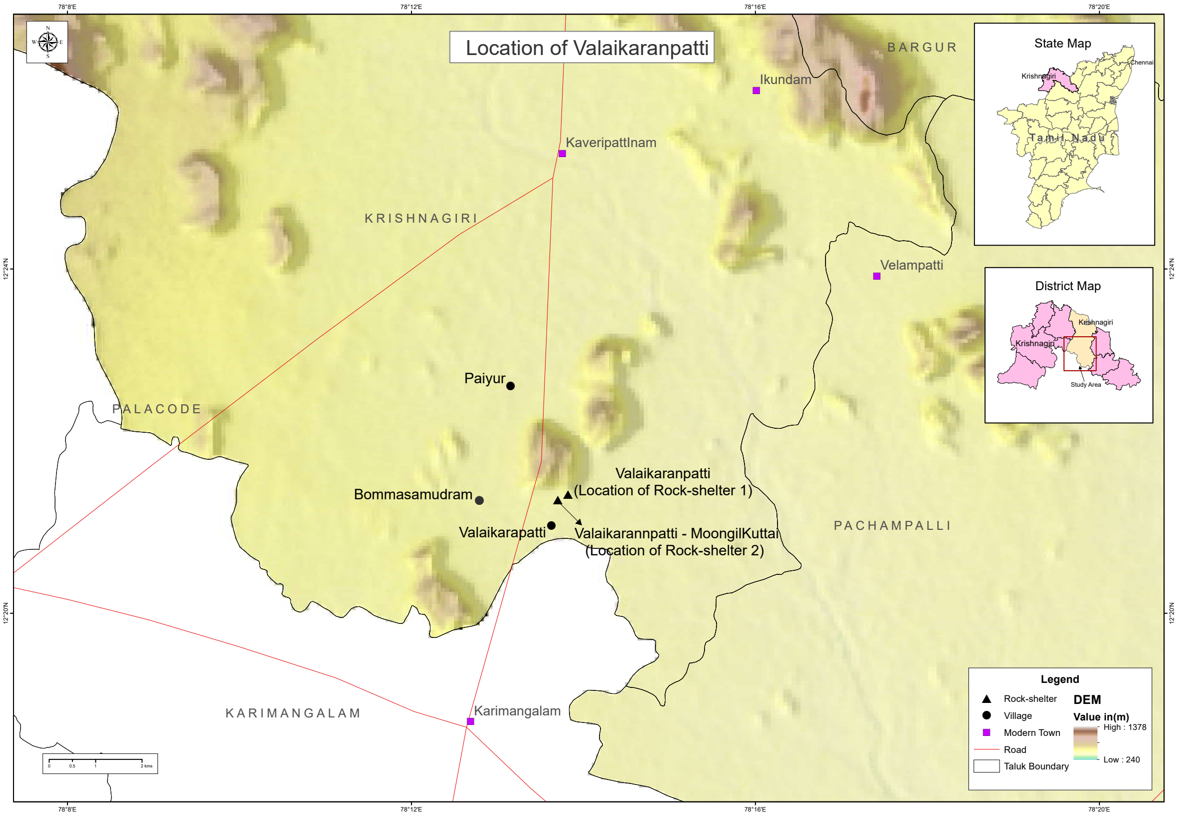
Rock Shelter

The painted surface of the first shelter is having a total length of 2.30 m, the total length of the rock shelter is about 4.10 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 2.30 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 2 m. The total painted area covers 2.30x130m. The shelter-2 is having a total length of about 5 m with a painted area of 1.90x1.20 m. The shelter-3 is having a total length of about 5.40 m with a painted area of 1.90 sq.m.



Location of Valaikaranpatti
78°8'E
78°12'E
78°16'E
78°20'E
12°24'N
12°20'N
PALACODE
KRISHNAGIRI
BARGUR
Ikundam
KaveripattInam
Velampatti
Thenpennai River
Paiyur
Bommasamudram
Valaikaranpatti
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Valaikarapatti
Valaikarannpatti - MoongilKuttai
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Nedungal Dam
PACHAMPALLI
KARIMANGALAM
Karimangalam
Barur Tank
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies

Map 4.40.1 Location of the rock shelter



Location of Valaikaranpatti
78°8'E
78°12'E
78°16'E
78°20'E
12°24'N
12°20'N
BARGUR
Ikundam
KaveripattInam
KRISHNAGIRI
Velampatti
Paiyur
PALACODE
Bommasamudram
Valaikaranpatti
(Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Valaikarapatti
Valaikarannpatti - MoongilKuttai
(Location of Rock-shelter 2)
PACHAMPALLI
KARIMANGALAM
Karimangalam
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Krishnagiri
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.40.2 Location of the rock shelter

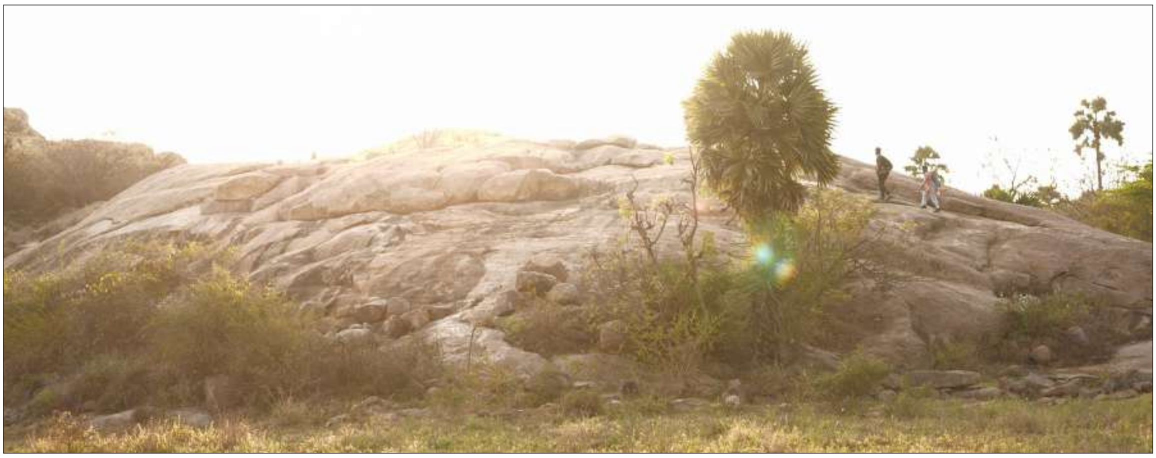


Fig. 4.40.1 General view of the rock shelter

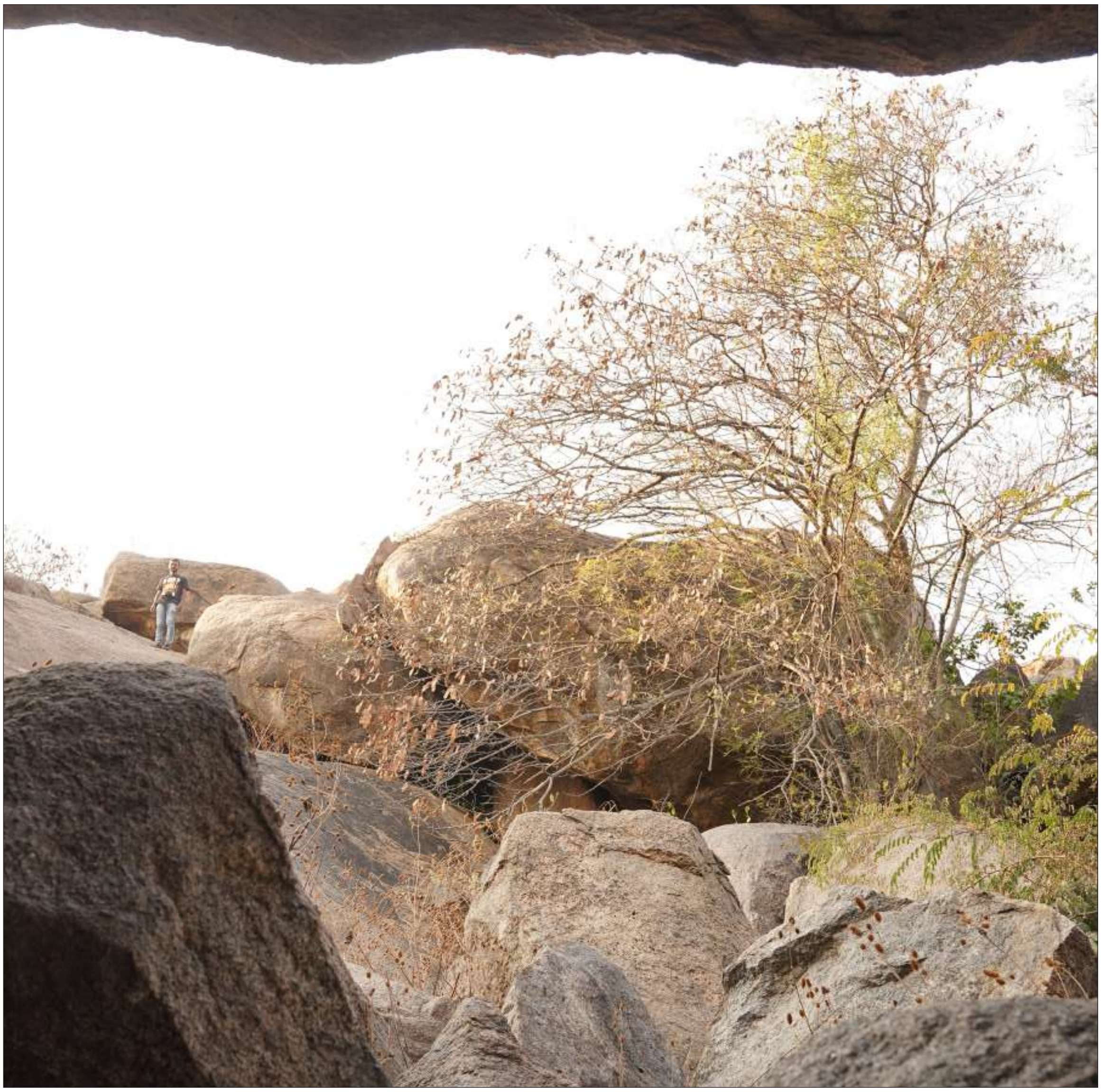


Fig. 4.40.2 General view of the rock shelter

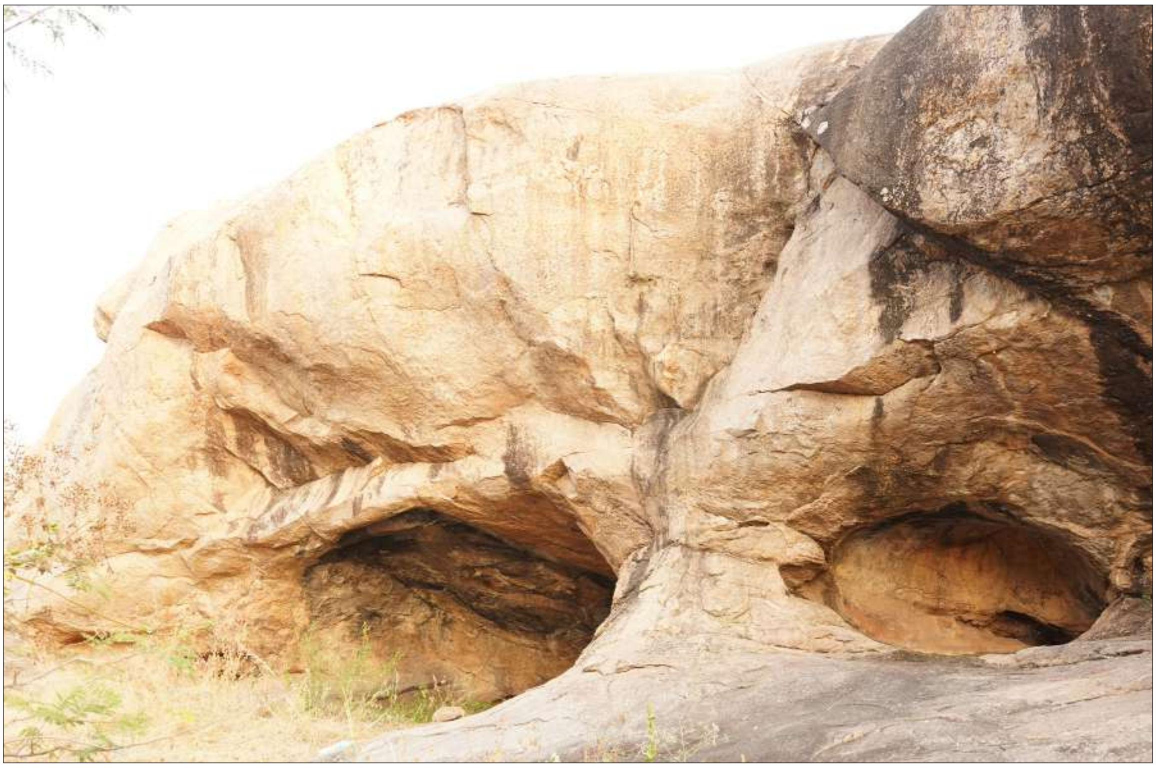


Fig. 4.40.3 General view of the rock shelter

Description

The rock shelter contains depictions of human figures, a ladder, a house, a lamp, a trident, a *swastika*, a wheel and fish symbols. Mostly all the paintings are executed in white colour.

Panel Description

All the paintings of this cluster are made of white, thick strokes and stick fashioned. At the top, there his a standing human figure possibly a hunter holding a bow on the right hand and the left hand lowered. This figure is not completely in stick fashion because attention is given to the detailing of the distinction of the upper and lower parts of the body, head portion is clear. On the waist is shown a horizontal stick dissecting the body, probably an arrow stack or even a sword. The legs are painted facing towards the right. The bow is shown as 3/4th size of the human figure.

The next pictograph is painted below, slightly to the left of the previous one. Here, there are two proper stick fashioned human figures of more or less same height. Of which, the person on the right is shown with hands and legs extended and the hands are raised upward, the head portion is highlighted with a thickened stroke. The next figure is just beside the previous one on its left side. Here also the hands and legs are extended but the hands are extended downwards. The legs are extremely short and a horizontal line intersecting at the middle of the body. The last painting is also of a human figure with a thickened head portion, extended legs, left hand raised up and right hand pointed downwards (Fig. 4.40.4a-4.40.4b).

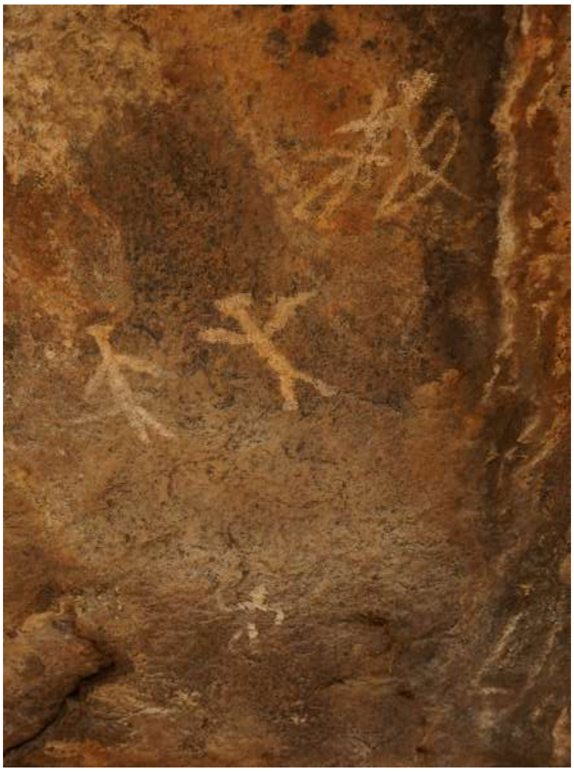


Fig. 4.40.4a Hunter with bow and arrow and three humans

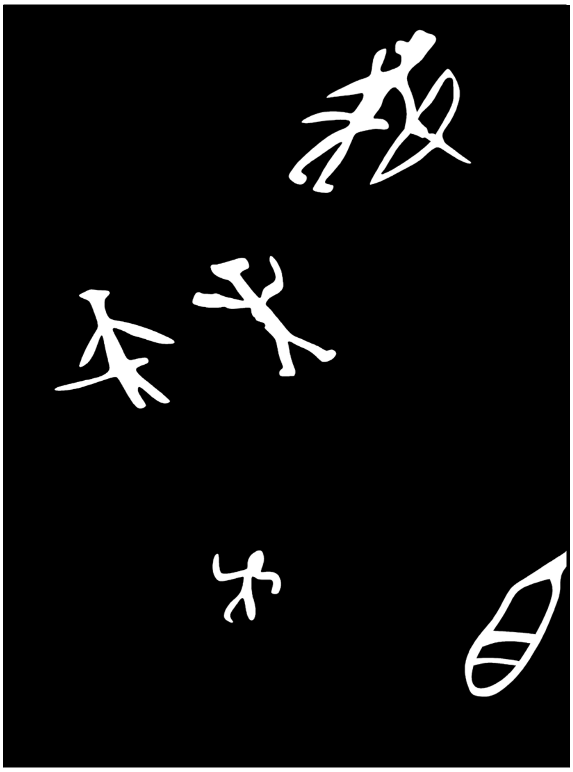


Fig. 4.40.4b Hunter with bow and arrow and three humans

Shelter-2

Here, only one ladder like sign made of white paint is evident with two vertical parallel lines of the same length with a small horizontal line intersecting them at the bottom, below which there are faded paintings which aren't visible even after image enhancement (Fig. 4.40.5a-4.40.5b).

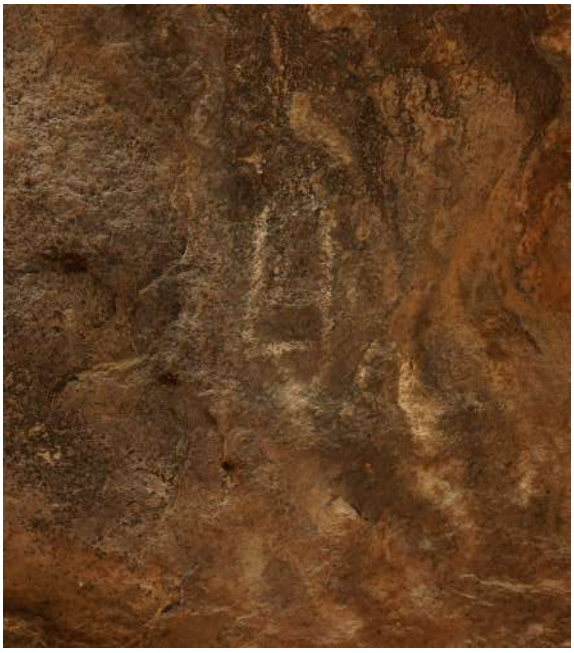


Fig. 4.40.5a Ladder like sign

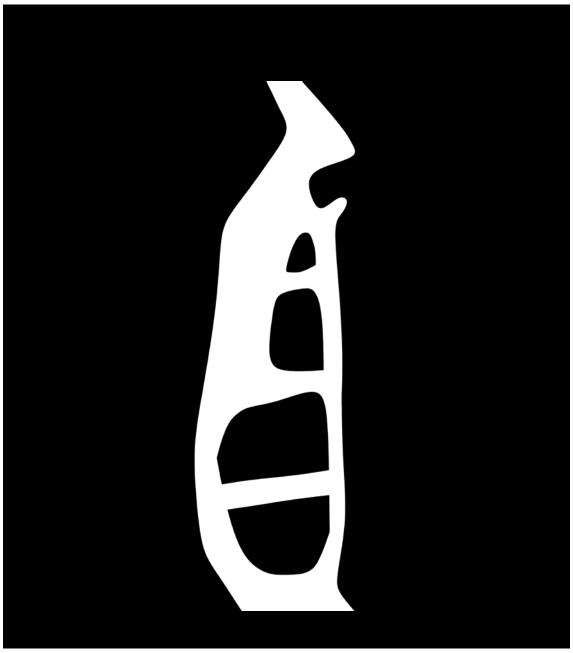


Fig. 4.40.5b Ladder like sign

In the bottom right corner, there is visible a pictograph of a fish painted in outline fashion with the indication of its eye made in a thick stroke of white. Slightly above it on the left side there are several faded unidentified white images (Fig. 4.40.6a-4.40.6b).

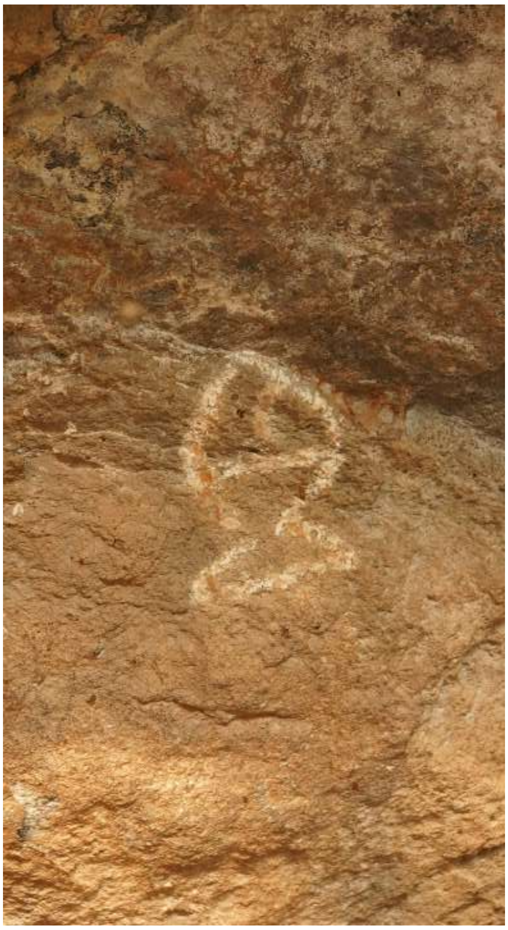


Fig. 4.40.6a Fish like sign

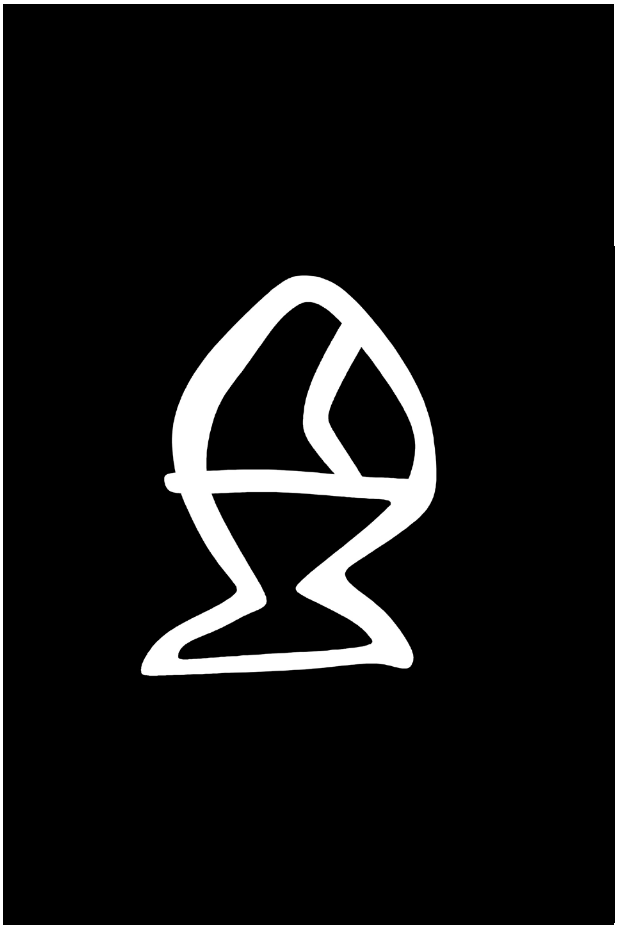


Fig. 4.40.6b Fish like sign

Shelter-3

Multiple human figures, geometric designs and many unidentified paintings are seen. Further to the left of the previous paintings, there is a geometric symbol/design painted in white which looks like a cross painted on a circle. Further to its left, there are instances of faded unidentified pictographs made of thick strokes of white. Adjacent to it, there is a large white human figure with an elongated body, short legs, long hands bended like a monkey in shape, a thickened upper portion of the body, and a distinct head is evident. Further to its left, there is a large trident depiction. Beneath these paintings, there is a thick infilling of white along with several faded unidentified pictographs. A stick fashion human figure encircled with an outline that looks like a halo is seen. The hands and legs are shown extended, with no thickening to indicate the head portion. Slightly above to the left of the previous pictograph there is another stick fashioned human figure with right hand raised up and the left hand down with lengthy body and short legs (Fig. 4.40.7a-4.40.7b).

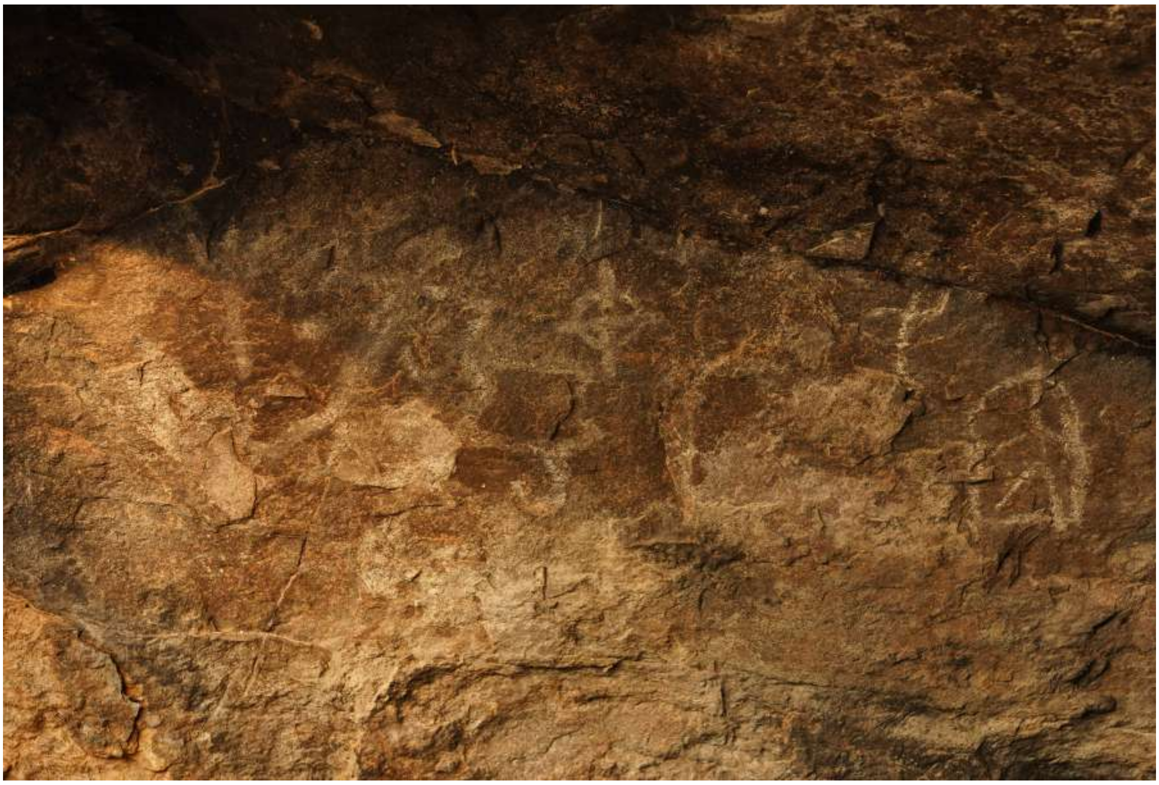


Fig. 4.40.7a Trident, humans and wheel like sign

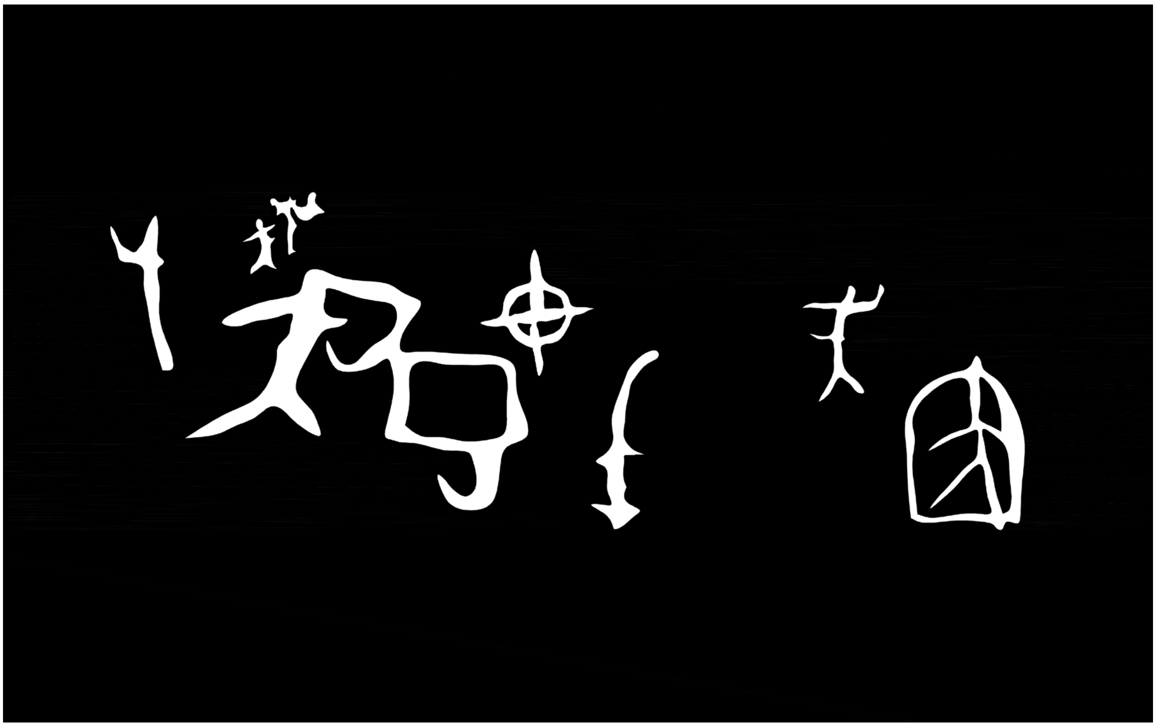


Fig. 4.40.7b Trident, humans and wheel like sign

This figure is a *swastika* symbol painted in white pigment. (Fig. 4.40.8a-4.40.8b).

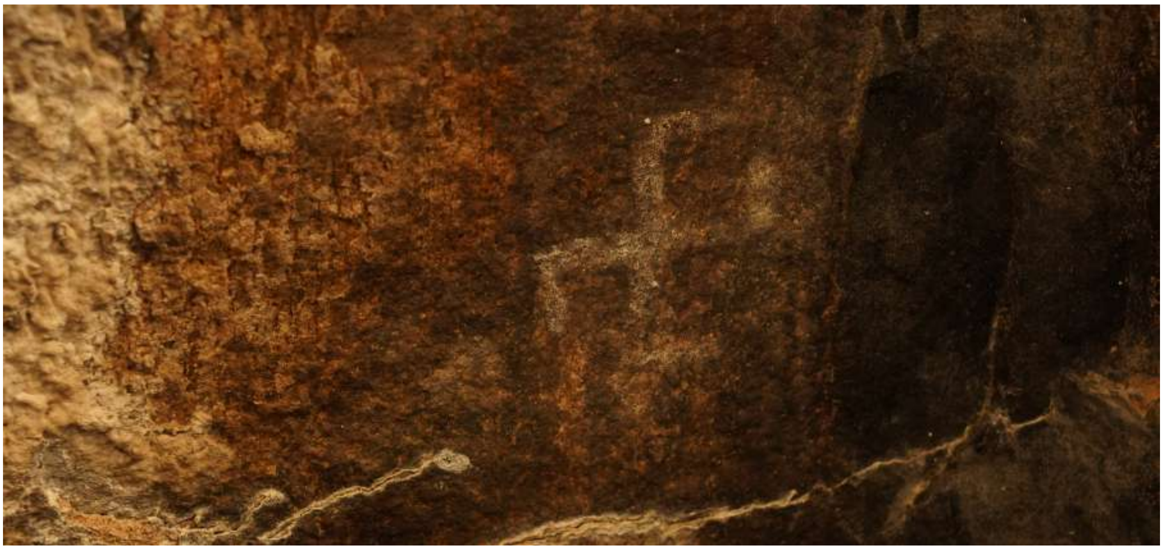


Fig. 4.40.8a "Swastika"

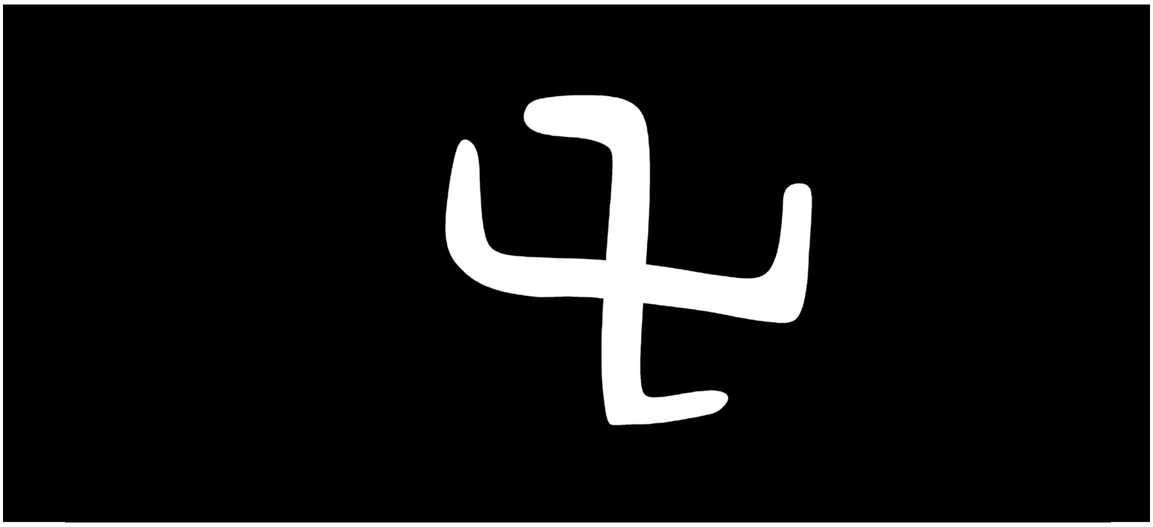


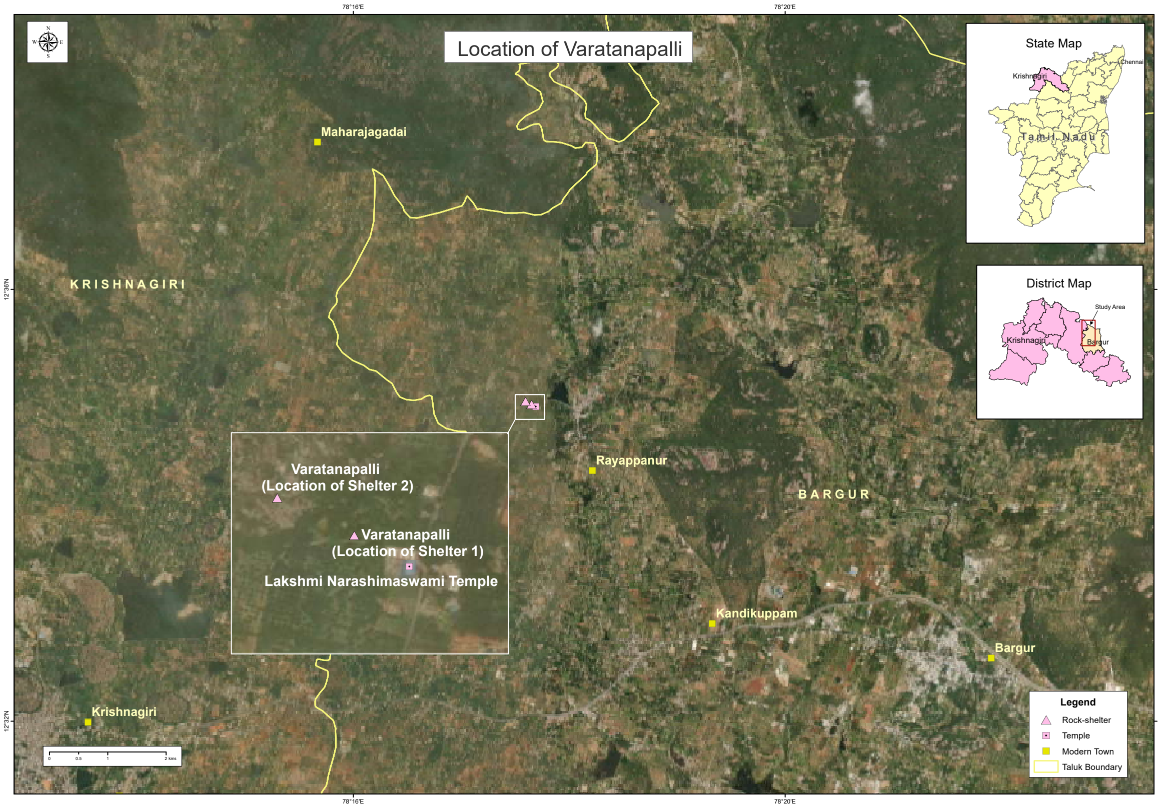
Fig. 4.40.8b "Swastika"

4.41. Varattanapalli

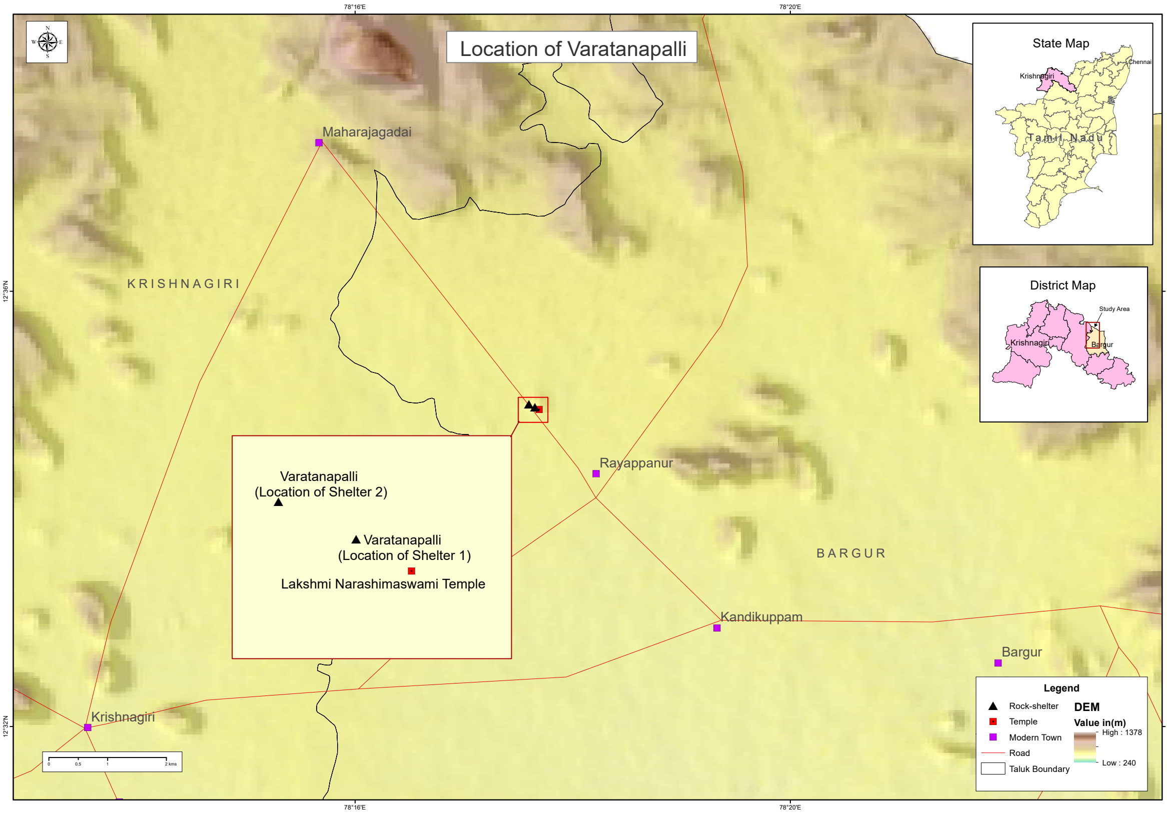
Varattanapalli (12.58227 N; 78.29420 E) is located in Barugur taluk of Krishnagiri district (Maps 4.41.1-4.402). The site lies 11 km east of Krishnagiri and 8 km south of Barugur. The site is having two rock shelters and are located behind the Lakshmi Narayana temple (Figs. 4.41.1-4.41.2). The paintings are executed in white pigments. Close to the shelter habitation is found which yielded a core and a Celt (Figs. 4.41.3-4.41.4).

Rock Shelter

The first shelter measures about 4.20 m in length and is having a painting surface of 3.50 m in length and the total height of the inclined rock surface is about 3 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 3 m. The total painting area is about 3.20 sq.m. The shelter no.2 is having a total length of about 4.50 m with the painted area of about 1.60 x 1m.


Location of Varatanapalli
Maharajagadai
KRISHNAGIRI
Varatanapalli
(Location of Shelter 2)
Varatanapalli
(Location of Shelter 1)
Lakshmi Narashimaswami Temple
Rayappanur
BARGUR
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary

Map 4.41.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Varatanapalli
Maharajagadai
KRISHNAGIRI
Varatanapalli
(Location of Shelter 2)
Varatanapalli
(Location of Shelter 1)
Lakshmi Narashimaswami Temple
Rayappanur
BARGUR
Kandikuppam
Bargur
Krishnagiri
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 1378
Low : 240

Map 4.41.2 Location of the rock shelter

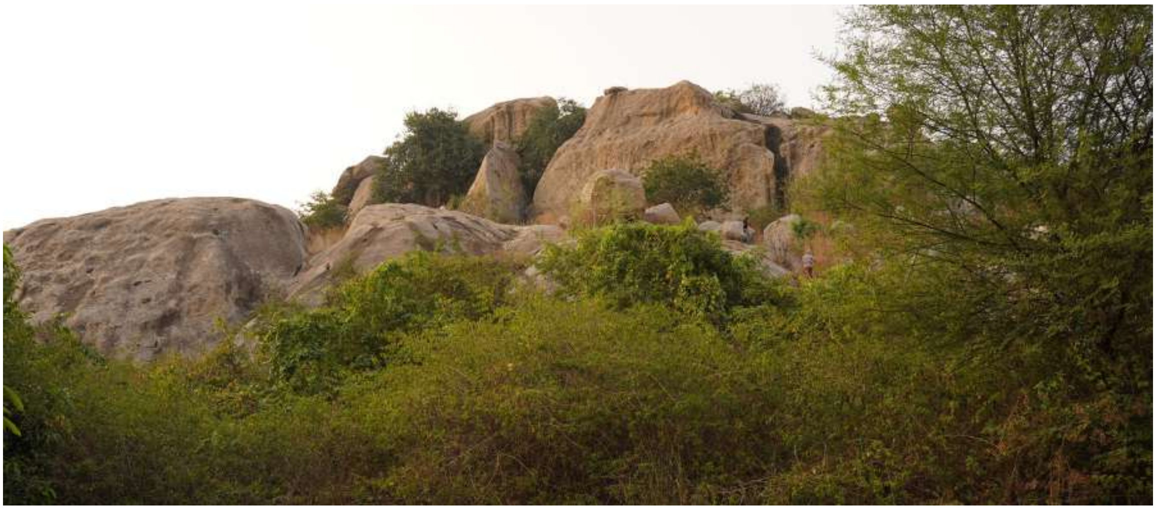


Fig. 4.41.1 General view of the rock shelter

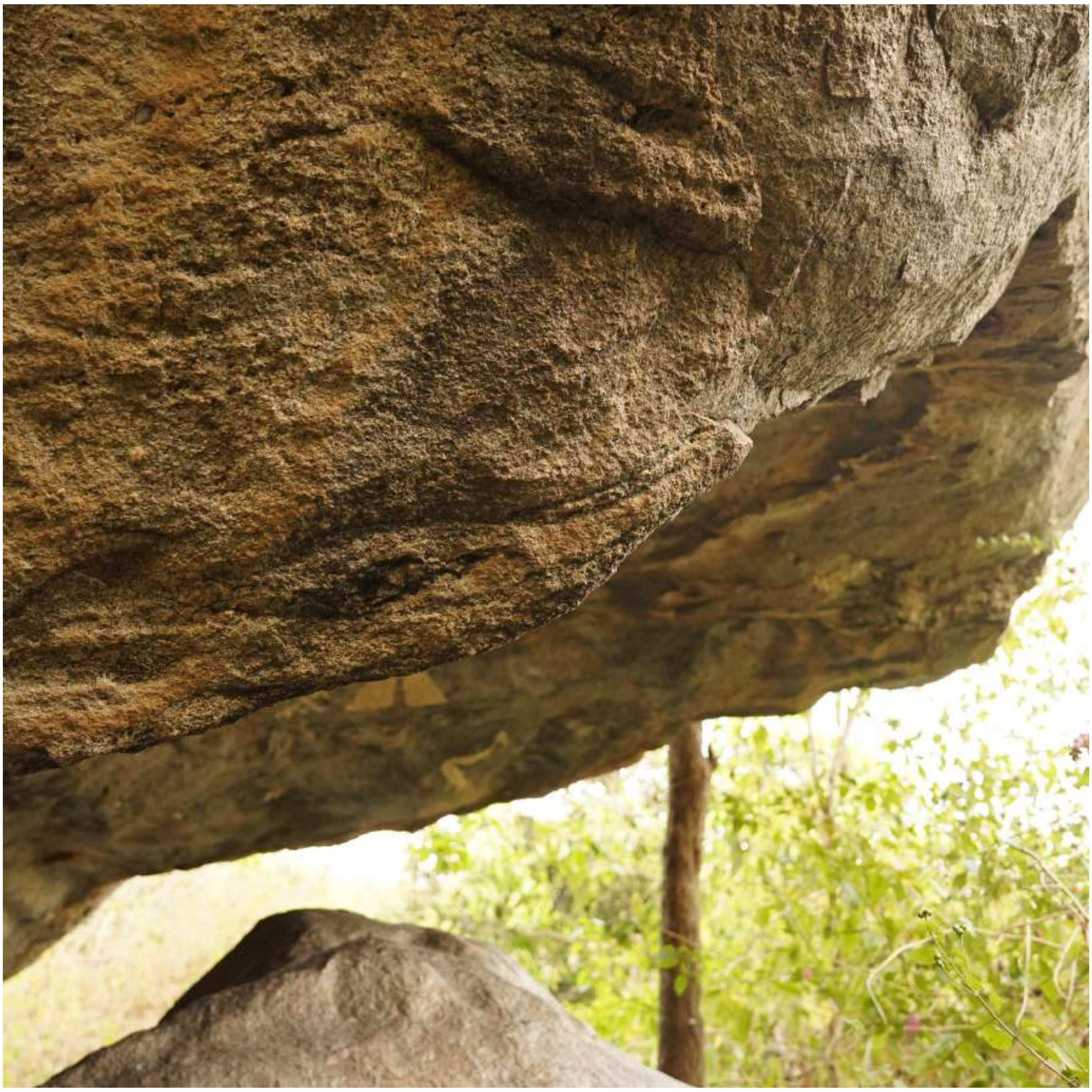


Fig. 4.41.2 General view of the rock shelter

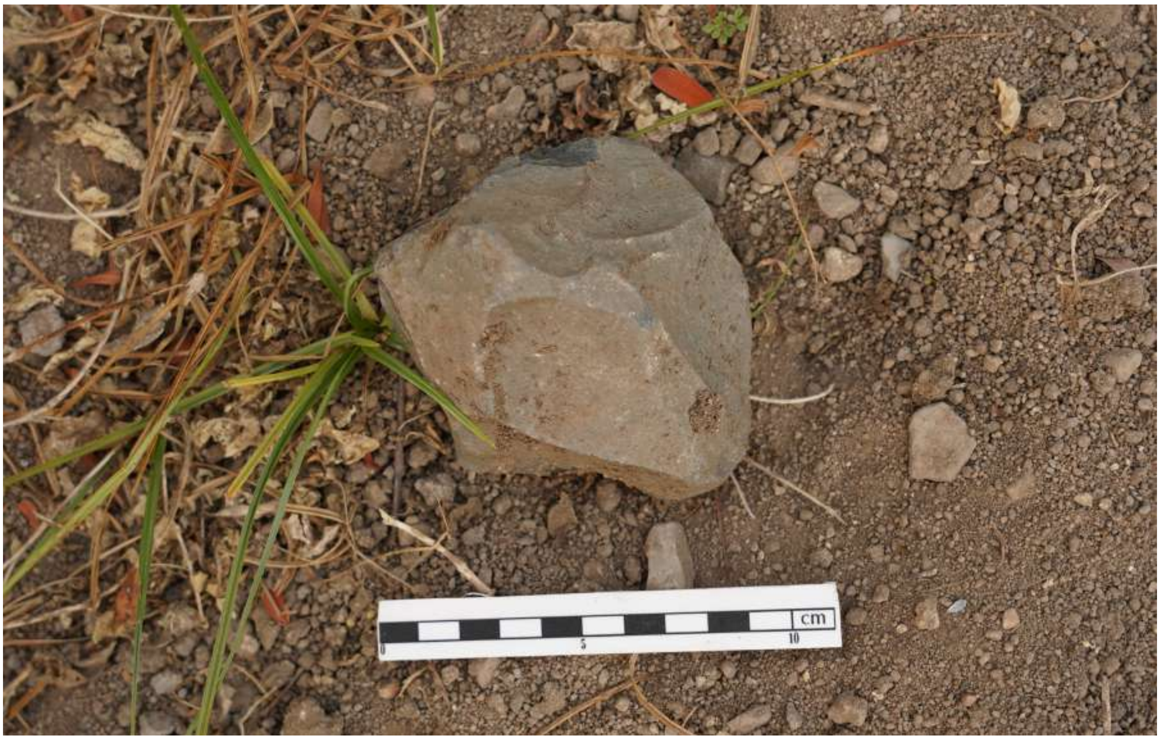


Fig. 4.41.3 Core material

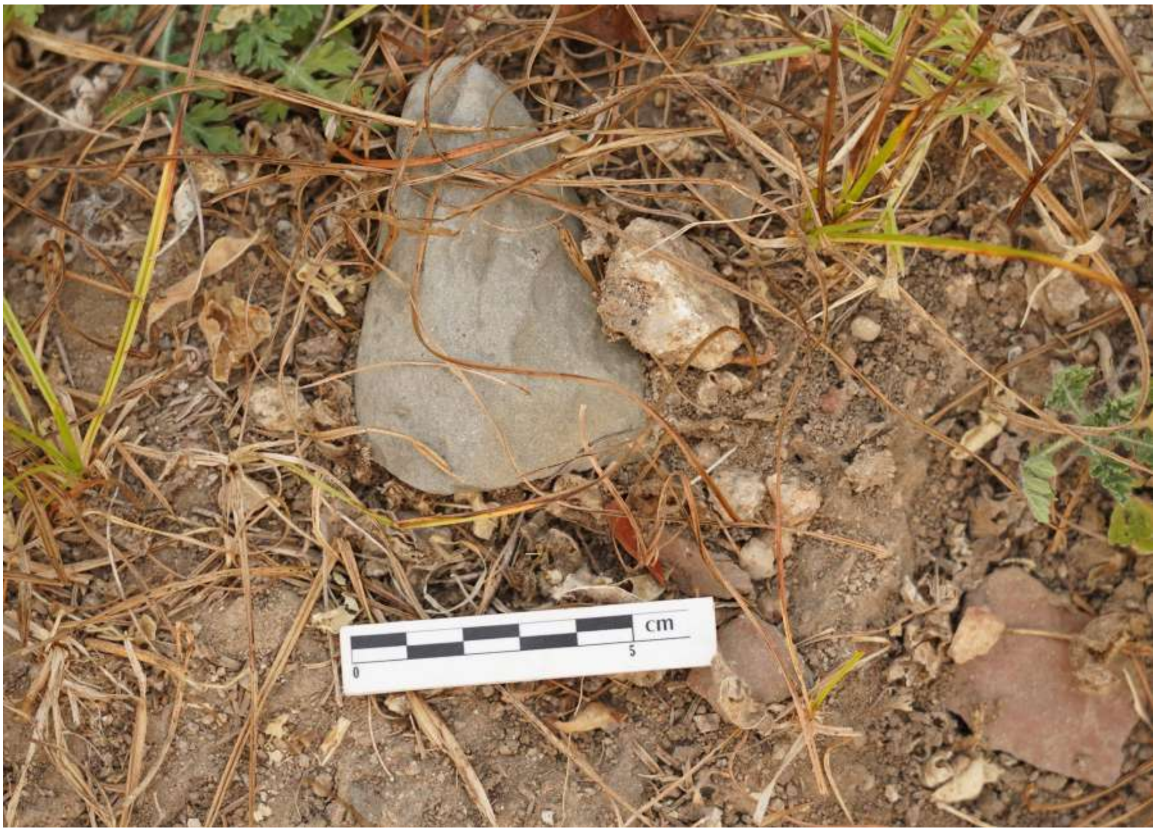


Fig. 4.41.4 Celt

Description

The paintings are in white pigment on the rocks behind the Narasimha Temple. The paintings are drawn as line drawings which have some human figures and geometrical designs like triangles and squares and some other symbols. The paintings here are widely scattered. The paintings are meant to convey a message rather than being drawn for decoration. They seem to be the signs of habitat, bodies of water, trees, etc. These paintings cannot be considered very early in times. However, these paintings can be seen as symbols of communication used by the past community who lived in the region at one time. The overall images represented in the rock-shelter consist of animal, wheel, geometrical, human, animal rider and bow and arrow.

Panel Description

Shelter-1

A pictograph with thick stroke representing an abstract image of a circle on the left with a single horizontal line and five vertical lines on its right was executed (Fig. 4.41.5a-4.41.5b).

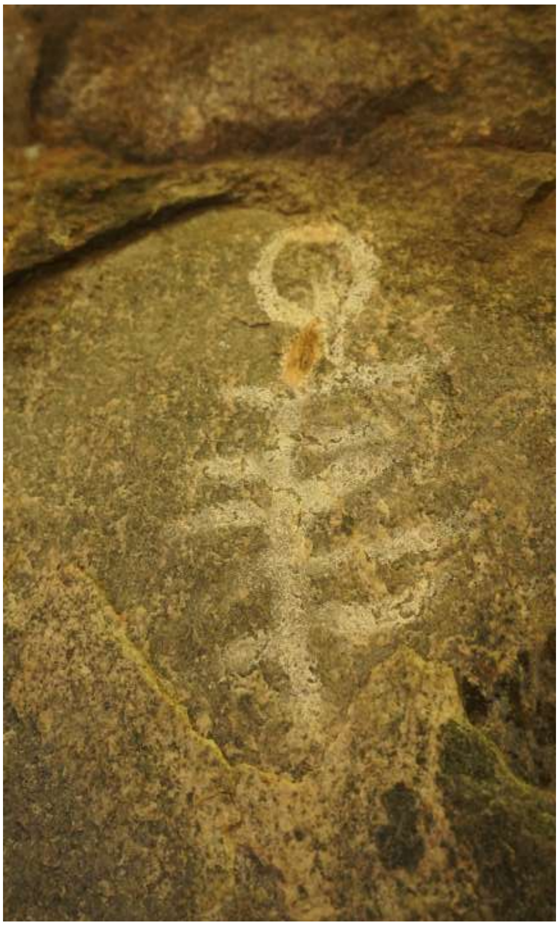


Fig. 4.41.5a Abstract image

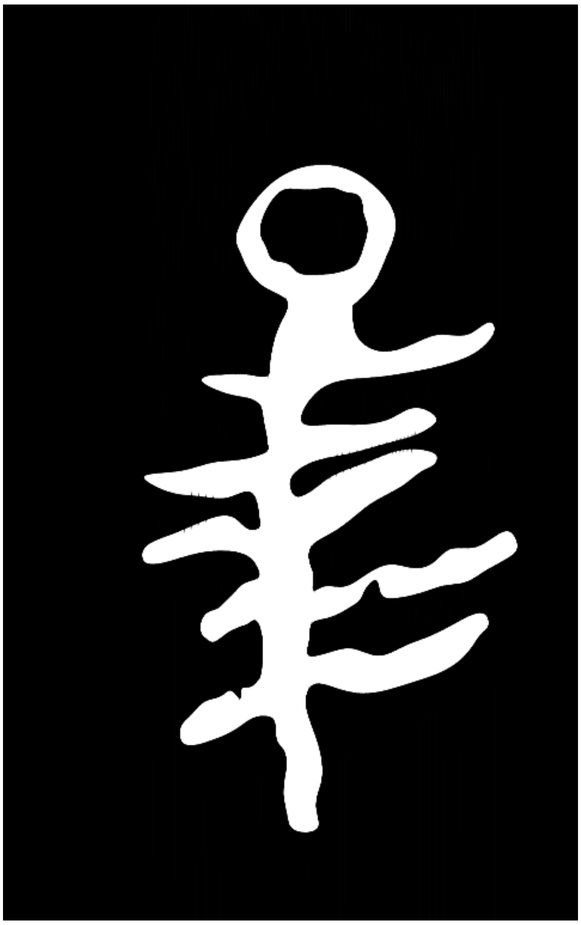


Fig. 4.41.5b Abstract image

A pictograph with thick strokes representing a wheel like sign having a circle with a cross in the centre (Fig. 4.41.6a-4.41.6b).

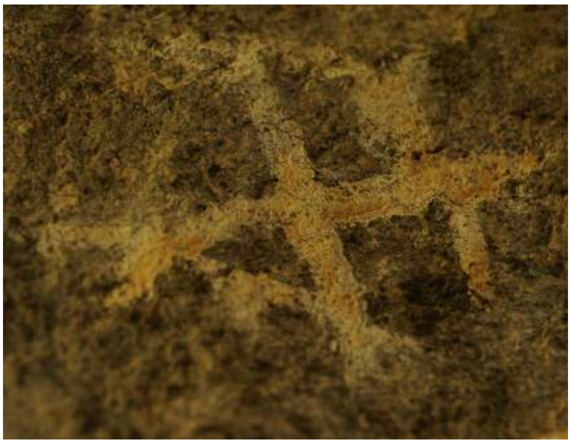


Fig. 4.41.6a Wheel like sign

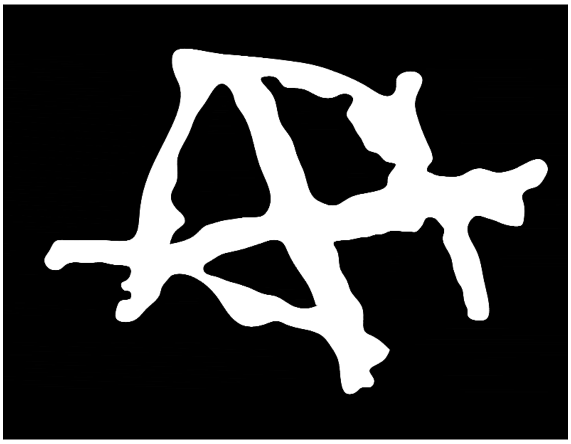


Fig. 4.41.6b Wheel like sign

Shelter-2

All the pictographs are of white pigment which contains several human, animal, geometric symbols and some unidentified paintings. Starting from the top leftmost corner, there is a pictograph of a human riding an animal shown holding an object (weapon), facing right. Exactly beneath it, there is a pictograph of geometric designs that roughly looks like a kite made of fine strokes in white, but at present in a quite faded condition. Beneath it, there is another white ochre fine stroke human figure shown facing towards left, a slight bent in the mid-body portion and holding some object in both hands. Down below the previous pictograph, there is an unidentified white ochre pictograph made of thick strokes is evident.

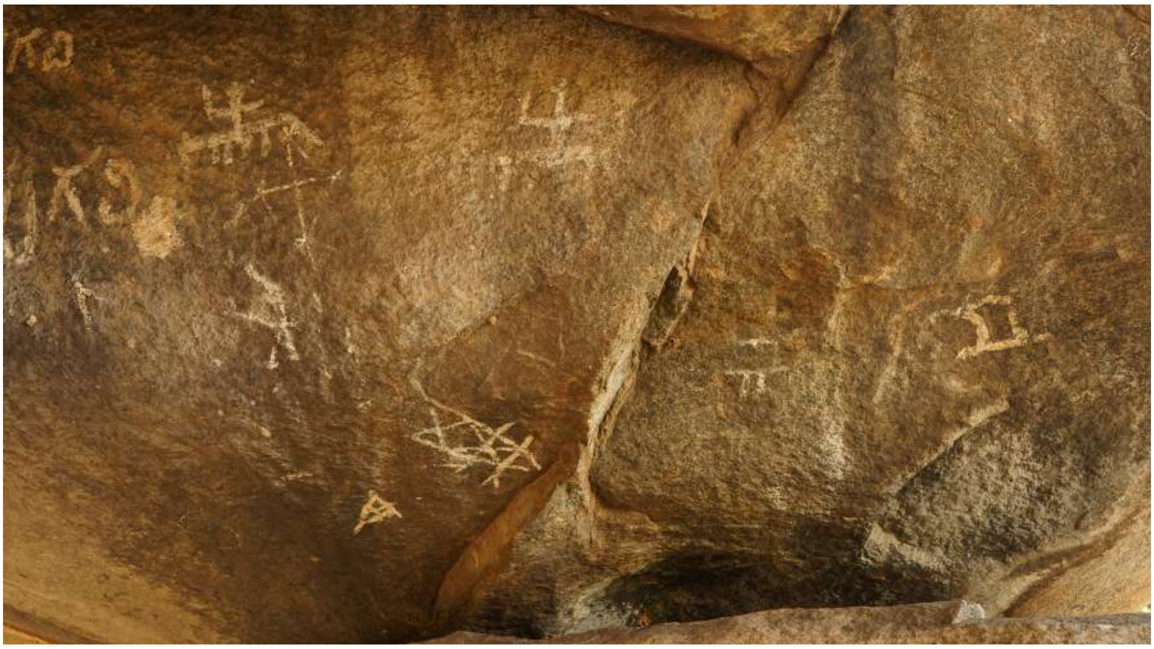


Fig. 4.41.7a Human, animal and geometric sign

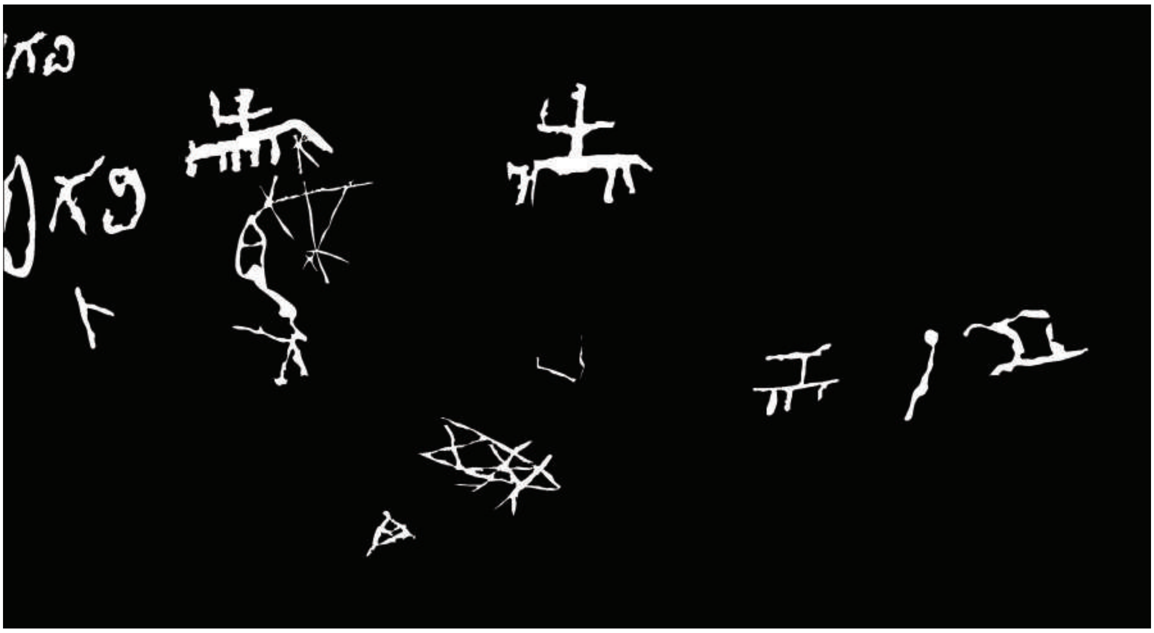


Fig. 4.41.7b Human, animal and geometric sign

Immediately above, slightly right of it, there is a partially faded quite large unidentified image which looks like several human figures standing behind a fence. Exactly above it, there are instances of a highly faded white painting. Above which, there is another rider image drawn facing towards the left, which gives an assumption of a connection between the earlier rider image and this one, making a scene of marching against each other. Further right of it on the portion after the fissure area is utilized as a canvas for a few other white ochre paintings which are presently highly degraded and not visible (Fig. 4.41.7a-4.41.7b).

Here is a thick stroke in white painting representing a geometric design of a circle/square with a cross inside (Fig. 4.41.8a-4.41.8b).

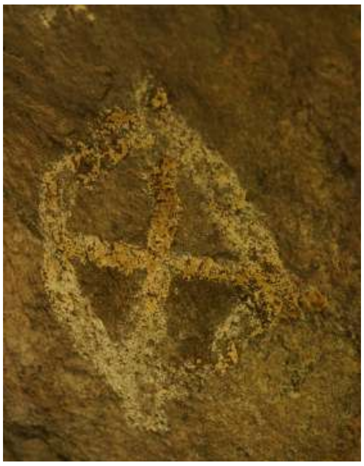


Fig. 4.41.8a Wheel

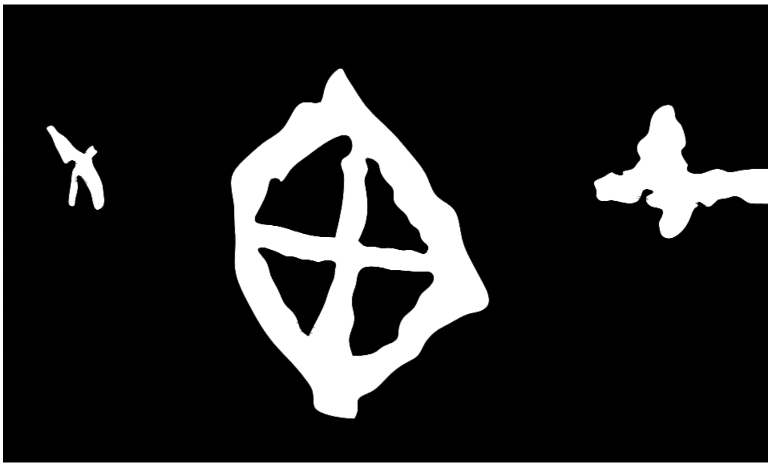


Fig. 4.41.8b Wheel

A thick white geometric design/symbol of a simple square with a left side line is almost completely faded (Fig. 4.41.9a-4.41.9b).

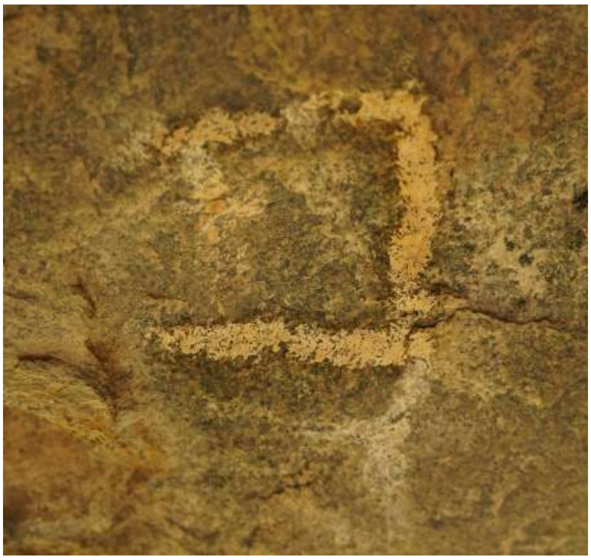


Fig. 4.41.9a Box

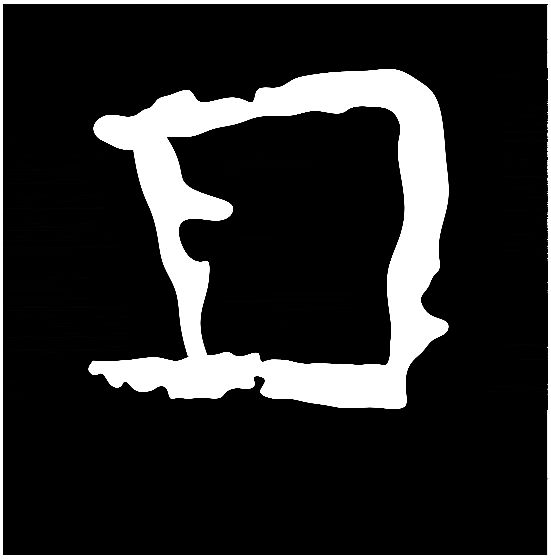


Fig. 4.41.9b Box

A human figure in white with a distinct head portion with legs facing right. Portrayed in a way suggesting a motion, both hands are kept in the waist portion of which the left hand's elbow portion has a line extending outwards (Fig. 4.41.10a-4.41.10b).

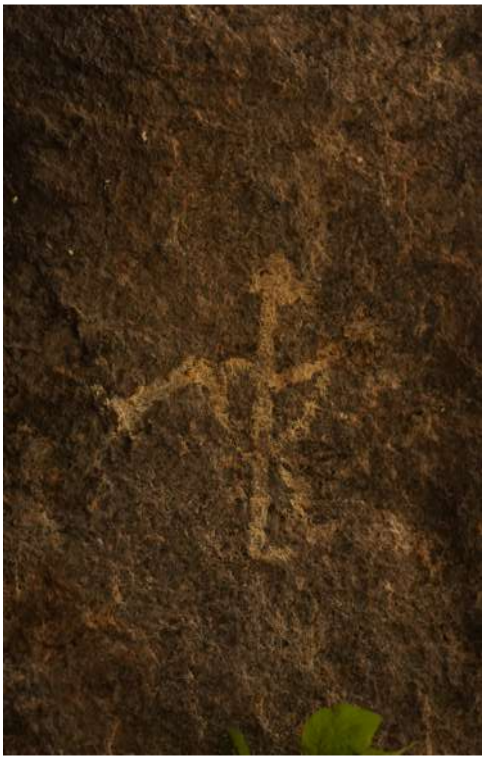


Fig. 4.41.10a Human

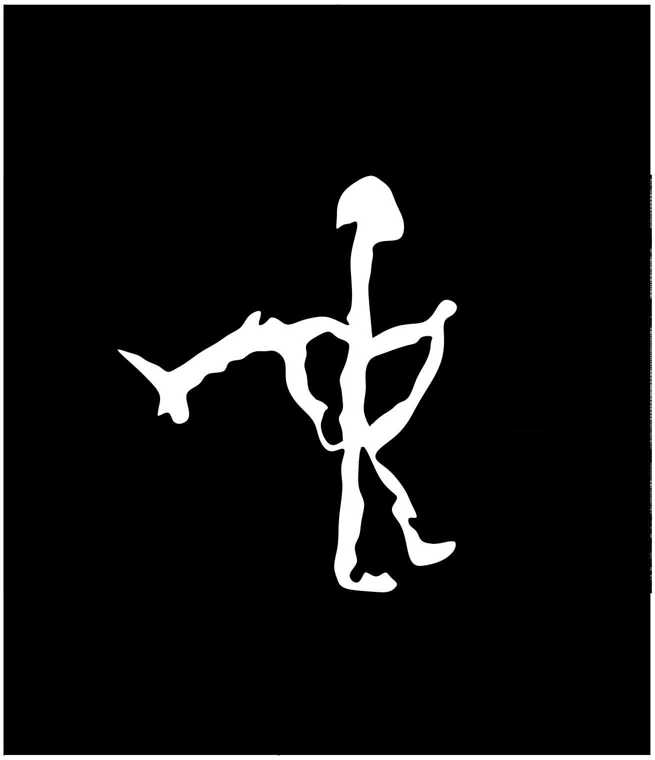


Fig. 4.41.10b Human

White ochre painting of a square with two diagonal lines drawn inside in which the intersecting portion of the two lines is highlighted with a small in-filled circle (Fig. 4.41.11a-4.41.11b).

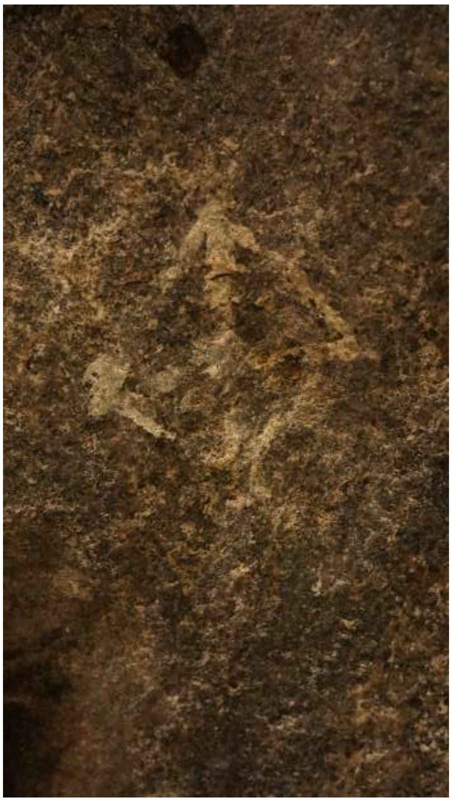


Fig. 4.41.11a Box

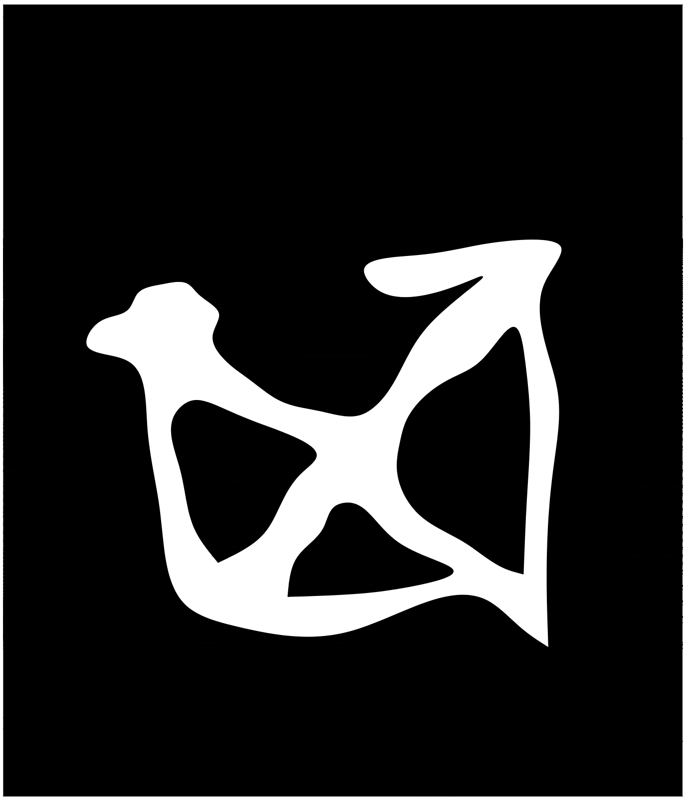


Fig. 4.41.11b Box

Another white ochre geometric symbol more or less similar to the previous pictograph. A square with two diagonal lines intersecting without highlighting the intersection point, but at the top right corner and the bottom left corner of the square there are instances of two step like lines which are in faded condition (Fig. 4.41.12a-4.41.12b).

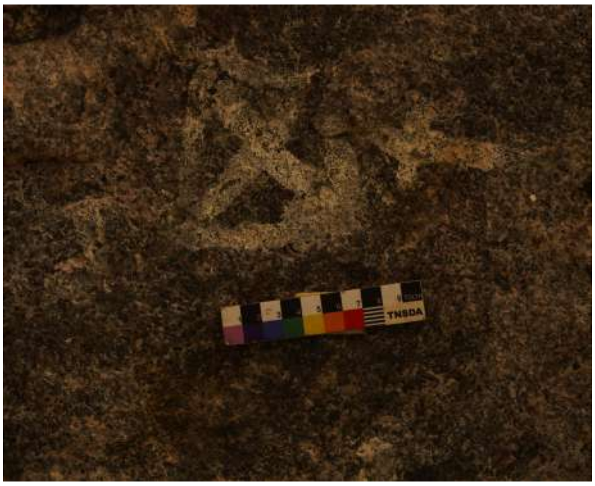


Fig. 4.41.12a Box

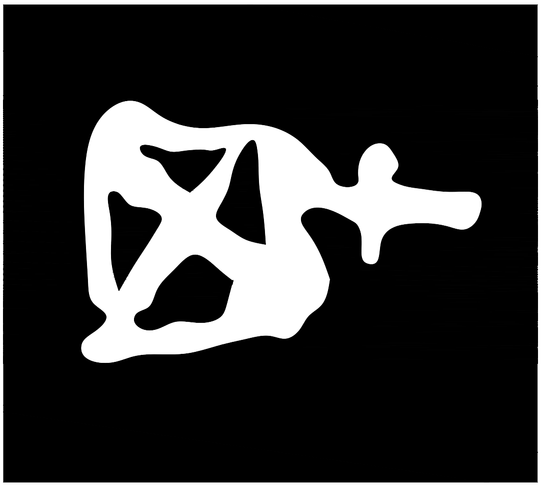


Fig. 4.41.12b Box

A thick stroke arrow mark symbol pointing left in white (Fig. 4.41.13a-4.41.13b).

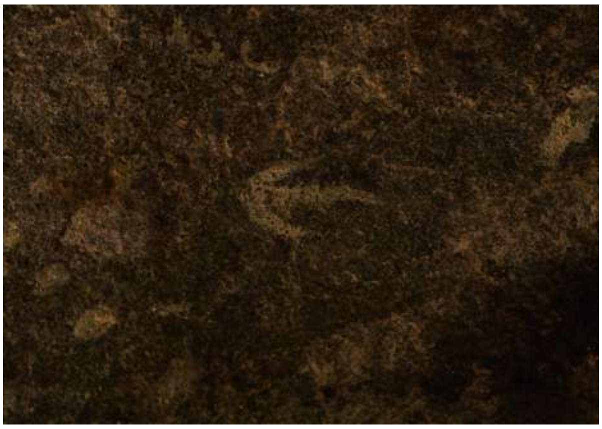


Fig. 4.41.13a Arrow

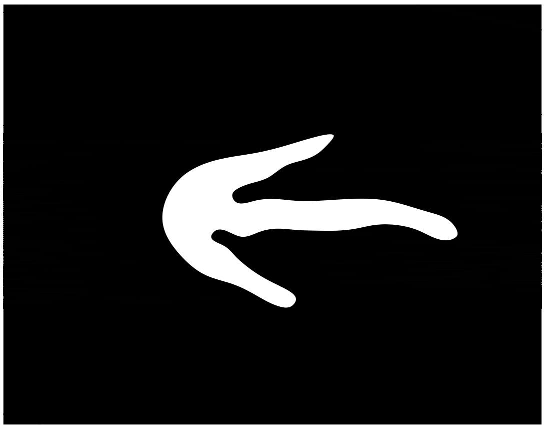


Fig. 4.41.13b Arrow

Here is shown a number of humans and a few animals painted in very fine strokes of white pigment. Based on the scenic depiction, placement, posture and objects one can assume it is probably a hunting scene depiction. Of which, two human figures and one animal figure are clearly visible and the other images are in faded condition (Fig. 4.41.14a-4.41.14b).

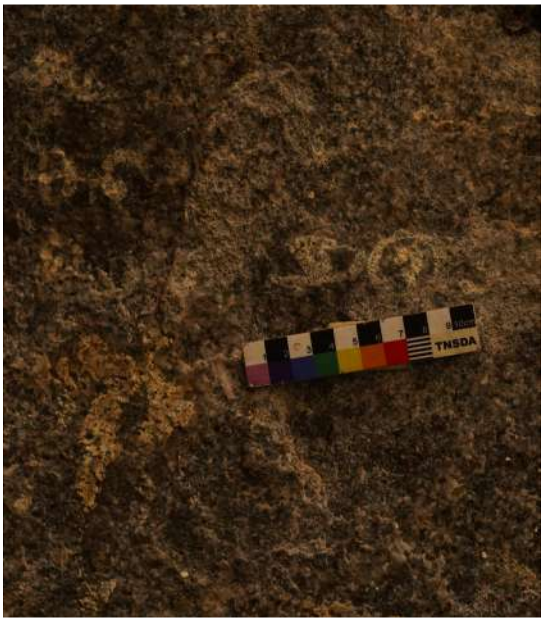


Fig. 4.41.14a Human

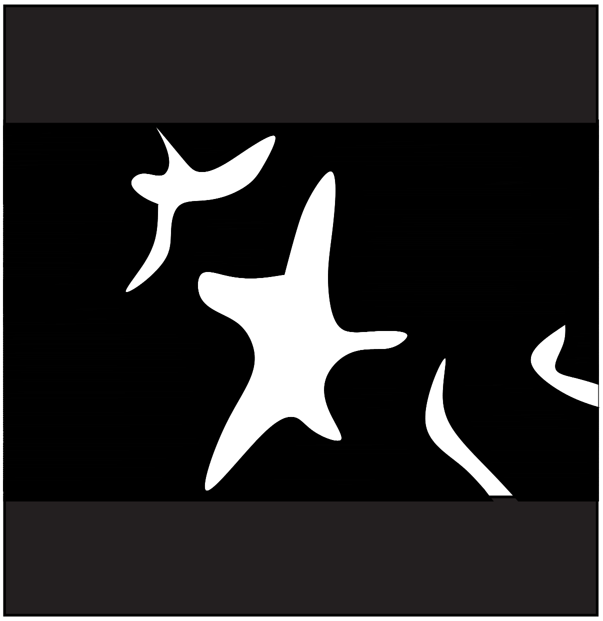
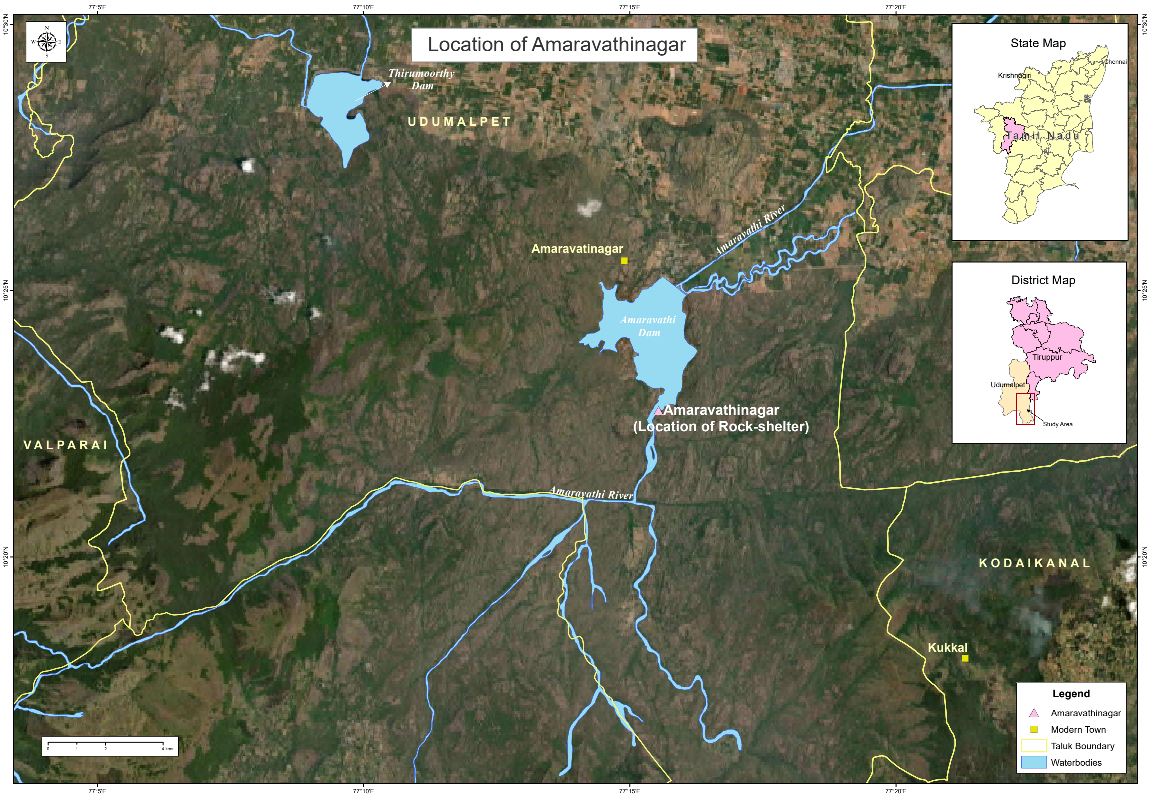


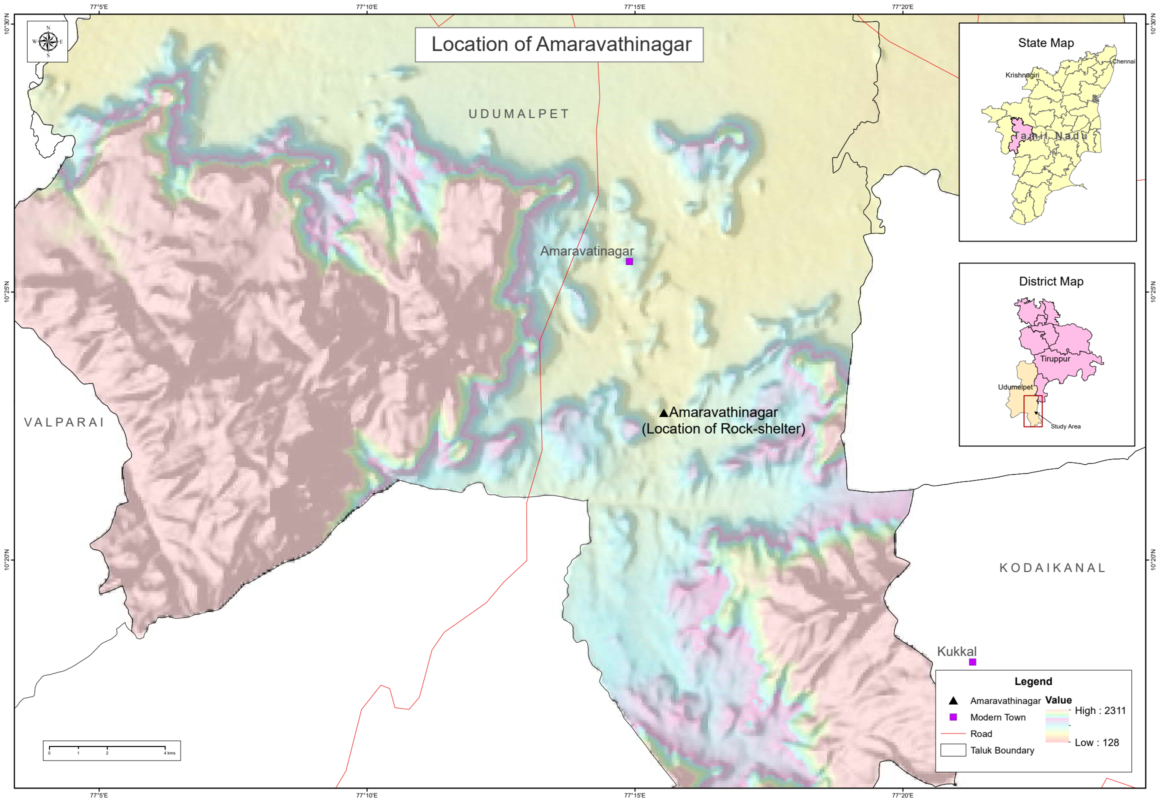
Fig. 4.41.14b Human

4.42 Amaravathinagar

Amaravathinagar (10.37908 N; 77.25902 E) is located at the foothill of Anaimalai in the Madattukulam taluk in Tiruppur district (Maps 4.42.1-4.42.2). Amaravathi Nagar lies at a distance of 21 km from Udumalaipetttai on the Udumalaipettai-Munar road. The village is a part of Amaravathi dam. The rock shelter is locally called *Ezuthalai* located in Periyathoovanam (Figs. 4.42.1-4.42.3). It is situated at the confluence of three tributaries of the Amarvathi river namely Thenaru, Pambaru and Chinnaru. Situated at a altitude of 350 m the rock shelter measures 15.40 m in length and 4 m in height. The paintings are executed in both red and white pigments.


Location of Amaravathinagar
Thirumoorthy Dam
UDUMALPET
Amaravatinagar
Amaravathi River
Amaravathi Dam
Amaravathinagar
(Location of Rock-shelter)
VALPARAI
Amaravathi River
KODAIKANAL
Kukkal
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Tiruppur
Udumelpet
Study Area
Legend
Amaravathinagar
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
77°5'E
77°10'E
77°15'E
77°20'E
10°30'N
10°25'N
10°20'N

Map 4.42.2 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Amaravathinagar
UDUMALPET
Amaravatinagar
Amaravathinagar
(Location of Rock-shelter)
VALPARAI
KODAIKANAL
Kukkal
State Map
Krishnagiri
Chennai
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Tiruppur
Udumelpet
Study Area
Legend
Amaravathinagar
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
Value
High : 2311
Low : 128
77°5'E
77°10'E
77°15'E
77°20'E
10°30'N
10°25'N
10°20'N

Map 4.42.1 Location of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The shelter is having total painted surface of about 3.50 m. The total length of the rock shelter is about 15.40 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 4 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 3 m.

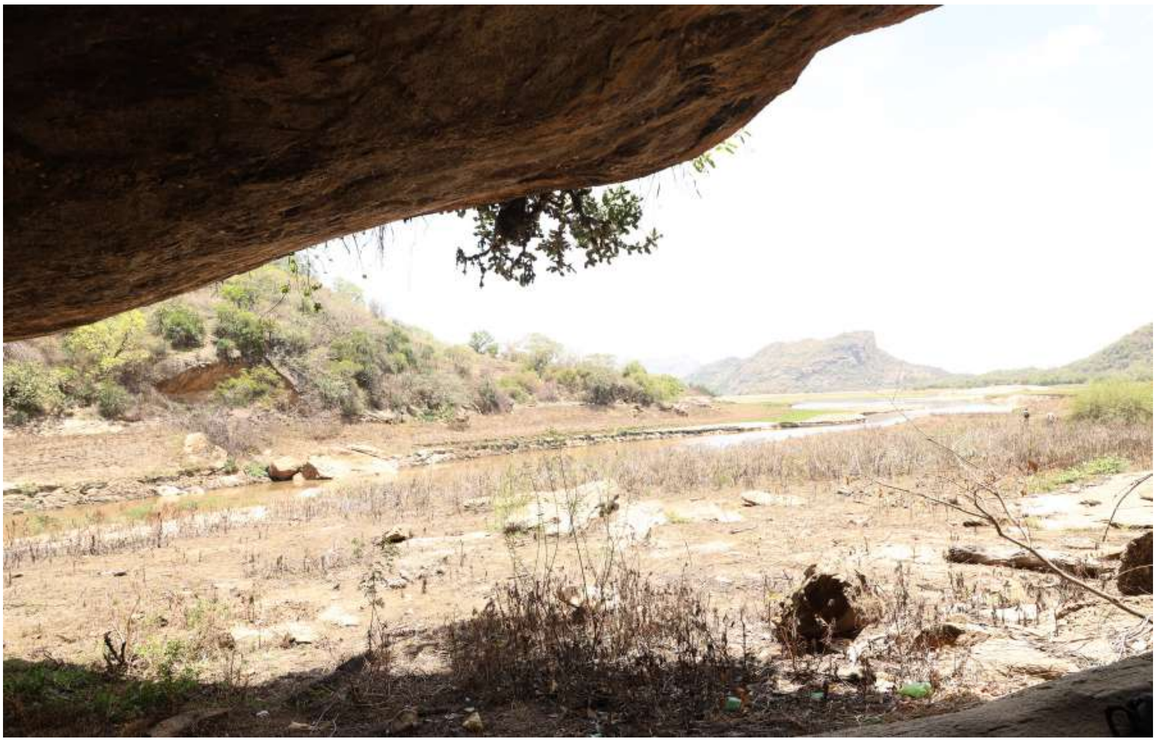


Fig. 4.42.1 General view of the rock shelter

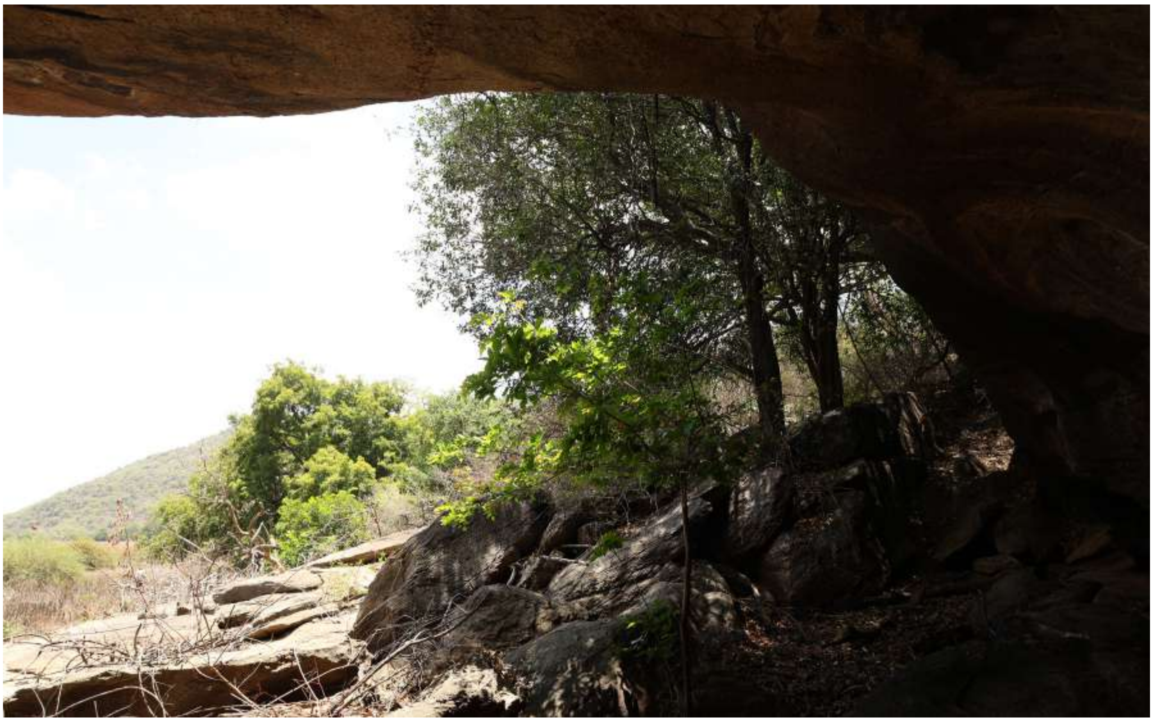


Fig. 4.42.2 General view of the rock shelter

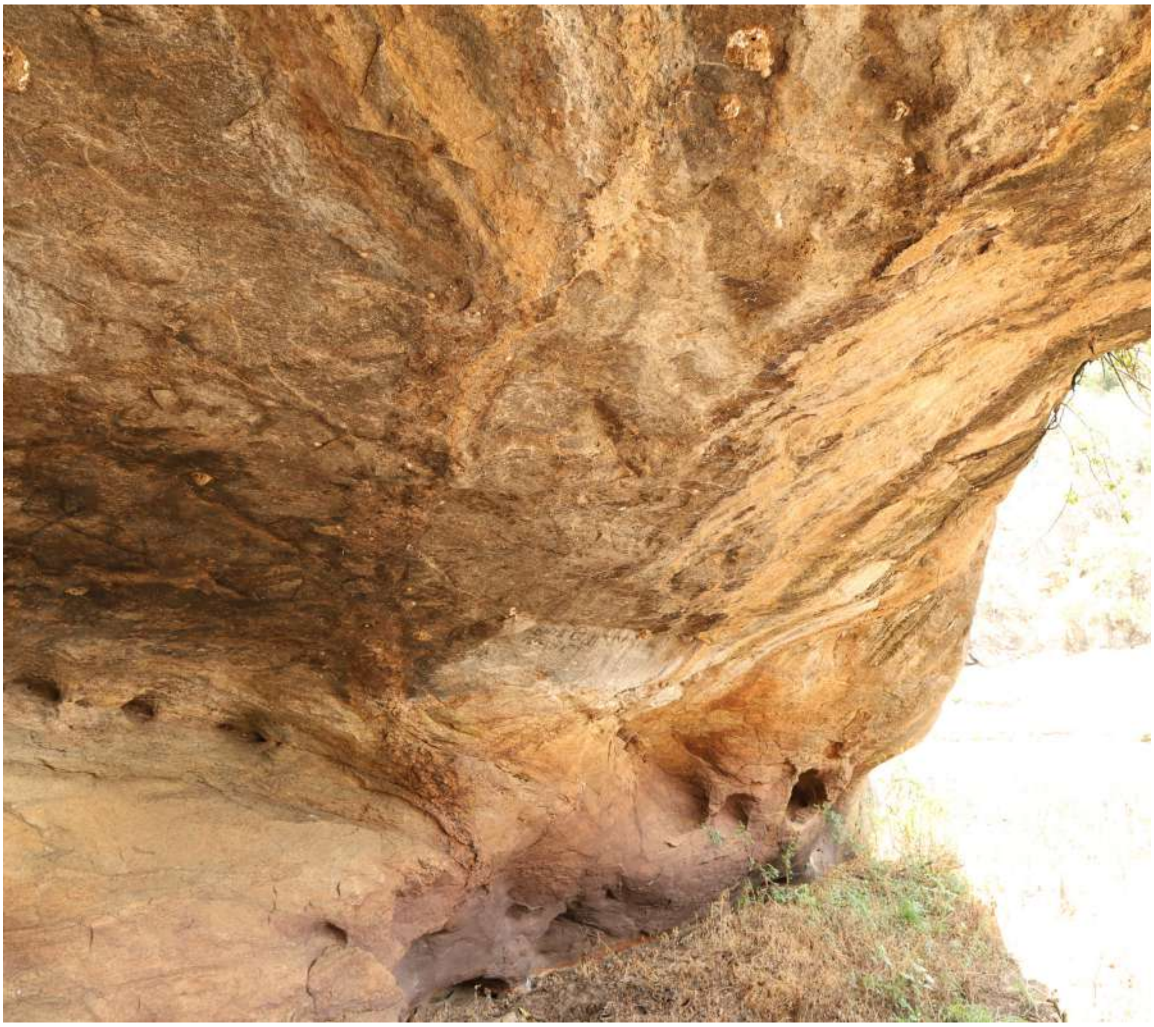


Fig. 4.42.3 General view of the rock shelter

Description

In this rock shelter, paintings are in red and white colours. In this panel, human and animal figures and geometric symbols are drawn. These paintings are executed in clusters. Human figures are holding weapons and female figures are in a dancing act. Another female figure is shown in a running position. A man is holding an animal in one hand and a long weapon in the other. Female figures are drawn in different styles and decorations. Horse, elephant and cattle are drawn. Many paintings are faded and not clearly visible. The white paintings are painted overlapping with the red paintings. The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of flora, human figures, geometric and abstarct symbols, animals and non-linear lines.

Panel Description

Red imageries are executed in thick strokes of floral representation of which the two leftmost paintings are clearly distinguishable but the right one's content is not clearly distinguishable (Fig. 4.42.4a-4.42.4b).

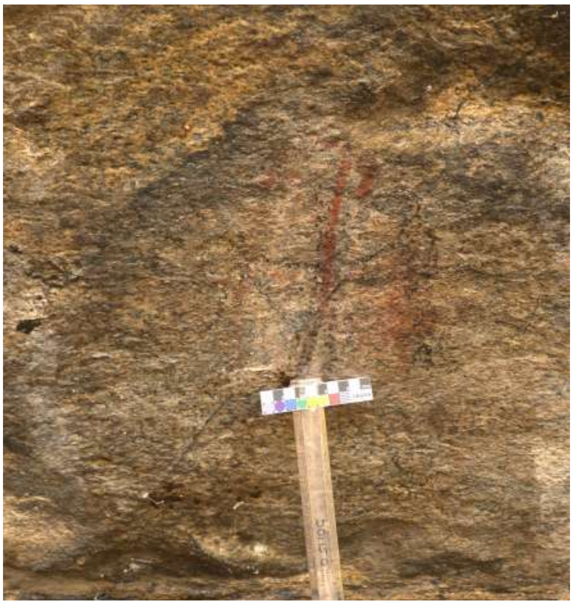


Fig. 4.42.4a Flora

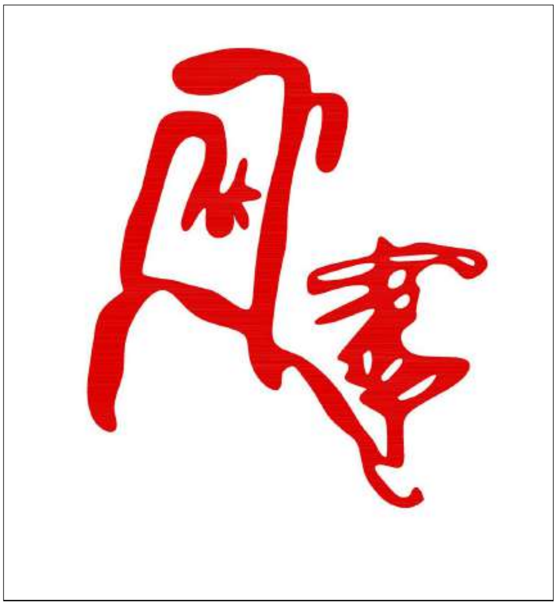


Fig. 4.42.4b Flora

Starting from right there is an infilled abstract image in red with an oval-shaped vacuum at its bottom portion. Next on the left, there is a thick-stroked human figure with wide open hands pointing upwards and wide-open legs, another parallel line above it indicates some kind of lower garment or ornamentation. To the left of it, there is a small human figure with wide open hands and legs. Beneath it, there is a hook shaped line drawn above which there is a 'V' shaped symbol. Immediately to the left of it, there is a thin vertical line in red with an inverted V, grounded on the aforementioned hook shaped line. Next to it, there is a simple line fashioned like a animal figure. In the top left, there are two 'V' symbols of which the left one is of thin fashion and the other one is a thick stroke (Fig. 4.42.5a-4.42.5b).

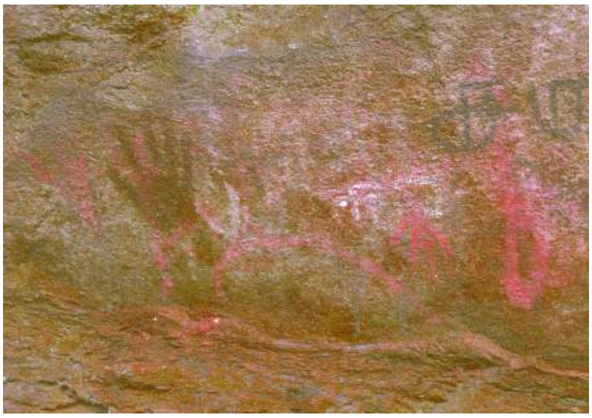


Fig. 4.42.5a Human figures, geometric and abstarct symbols

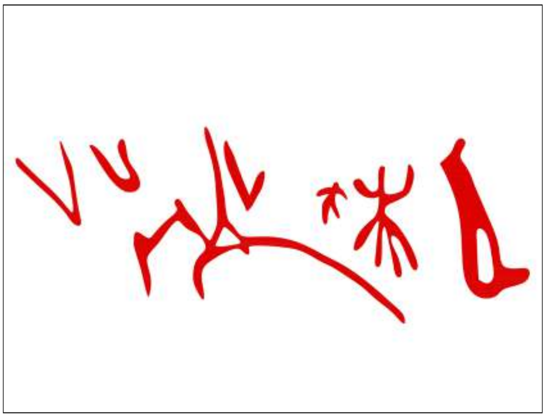


Fig. 4.42.5b Human figures, geometric and abstarct symbols

A cluster of thick strokes in red and infilling paintings, the contents of which are hardly distinguishable. On the right in between the clusters, there is one stick fashioned standing human figure (Fig. 4.42.6a-4.42.6b).

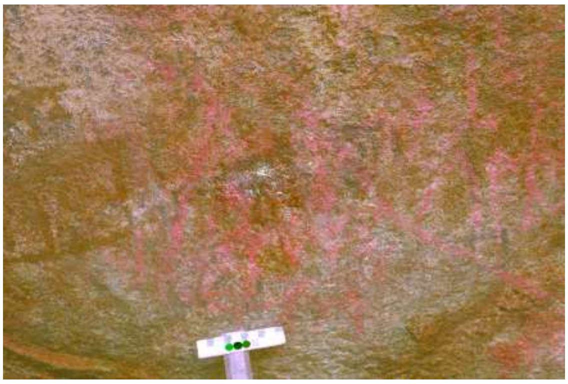


Fig. 4.42.6a *Geometric and abstarct signs*

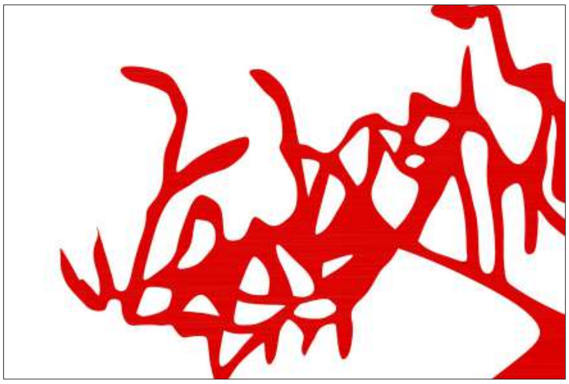


Fig. 4.42.6b *Geometric and abstarct signs*

An ithyphallic human figure and a few animal figures are painted in red ochre in a thick infilled fashion. The human figure with a circular head and extended hands, the right hand raised up and extended, is seen. At the same level, there is an animal figure made with a single horizontal line and three vertical lines (Fig. 4.42.7a-4.42.7b).

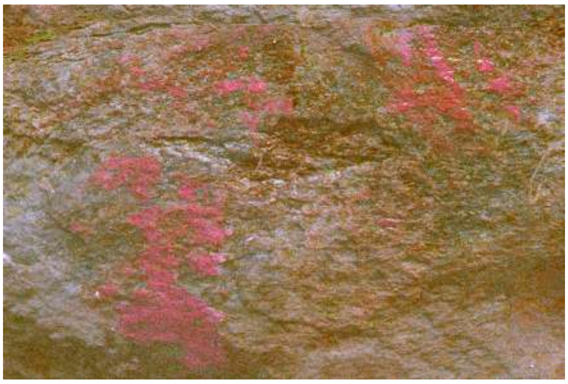


Fig. 4.42.7a *Ithyphallic human, animal and non-linear line*

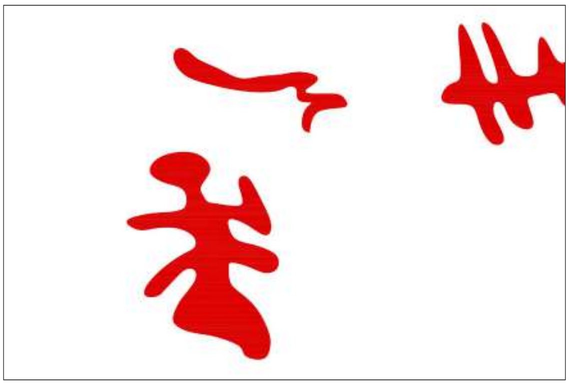
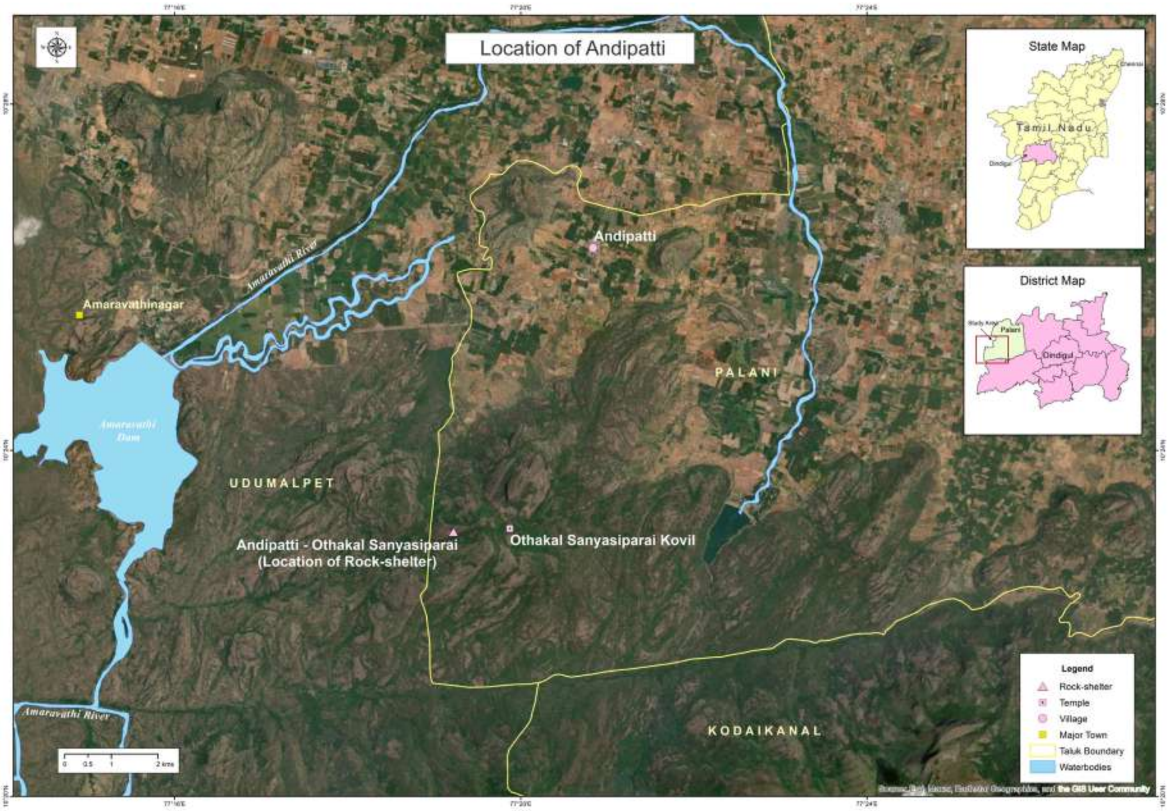


Fig. 4.42.7b *Ithyphallic human, animal and non-linear line*

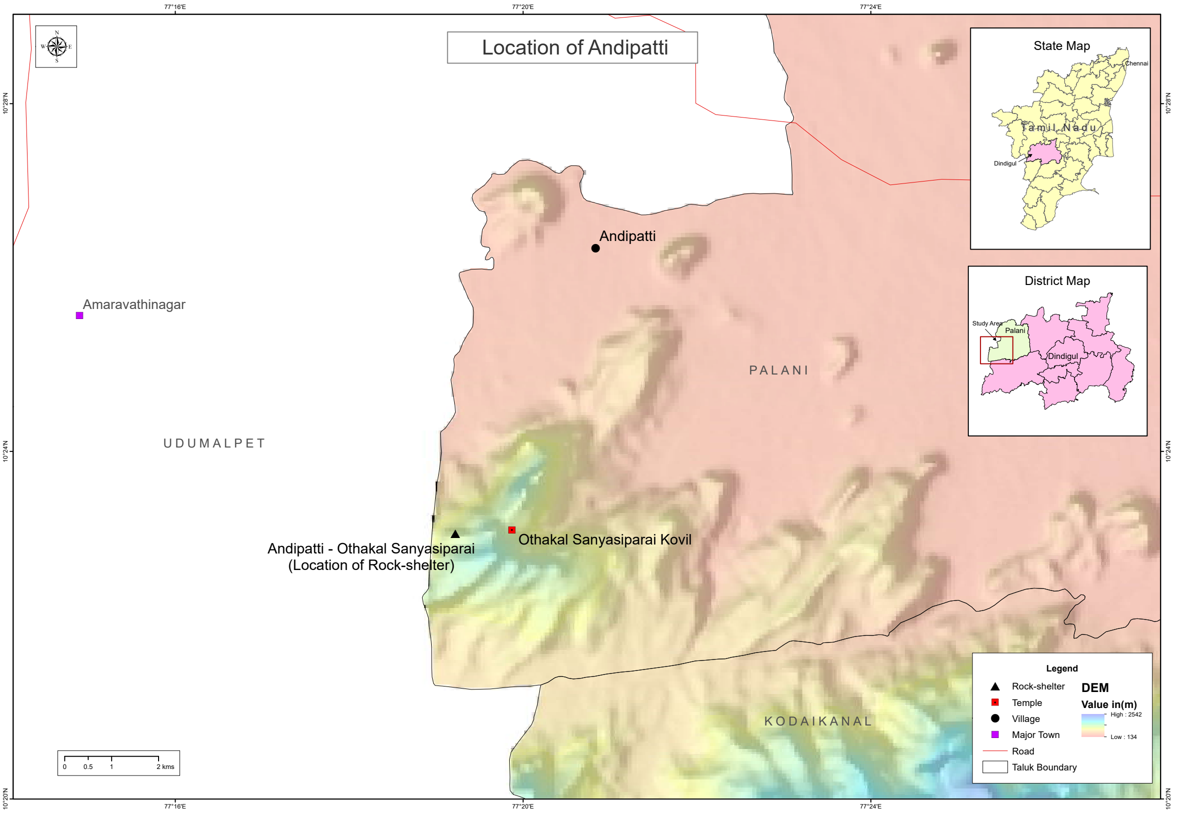
4.43 Andipatti*

Andipatti (10.384262 N; 77.320348 E) lies at a distance of 27 km from Udumalaipettai and one has to take a diversion towards south at Ruthrapalayam, which is located 19 km to the east of Udumalaipettai on the Palani hill and 1 km from Kozhumam (Maps 4.43.1-4.43.2). The rock shelter locally known as *Otta Sanyasikalparai* or *Chithiran muthiram aala* lies at an altitude of about 1130 m AMSL (Fig. 4.43.1-4.43.2). This could be approached from Manthittu located at the foot hill about 12 km to the south of Andipatti. The rock shelter lies on the hillock called Mangudi which lies about 4 km from Manthittu. A small river Atthi-odai flows in the middle of the hillock. The Ottakkal Sanyasiyappan temple lies close to the rock shelter. The paintings are executed both with red and white pigments. This is one of the rock shelters located at the highest altitudes. The total length of the shelter is about 64 m and is at a height of 8 m.

*Andipatti is currently located in Dindigul district


Location of Andipatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Dindigul
District Map
Study Area
Palani
Dindigul
Andipatti
Amaravathinagar
Amaravathi River
Amaravathi Dam
UDUMALPET
PALANI
KODAIKANAL
Andipatti - Othakal Sanyasiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Othakal Sanyasiparai Kovil
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Major Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
0 0.5 1 2 kms
77°16'E
77°20'E
77°24'E
10°28'N
10°24'N
10°20'N

Map 4.43.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Andipatti
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Dindigul
District Map
Study Area
Palani
Dindigul
Andipatti
Amaravathinagar
UDUMALPET
PALANI
KODAIKANAL
Andipatti - Othakal Sanyasiparai
(Location of Rock-shelter)
Othakal Sanyasiparai Kovil
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Village
Major Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 2542
Low : 134
0 0.5 1 2 kms
77°16'E
77°20'E
77°24'E
10°28'N
10°24'N
10°20'N

Map 4.43.2 Location of the rock shelter

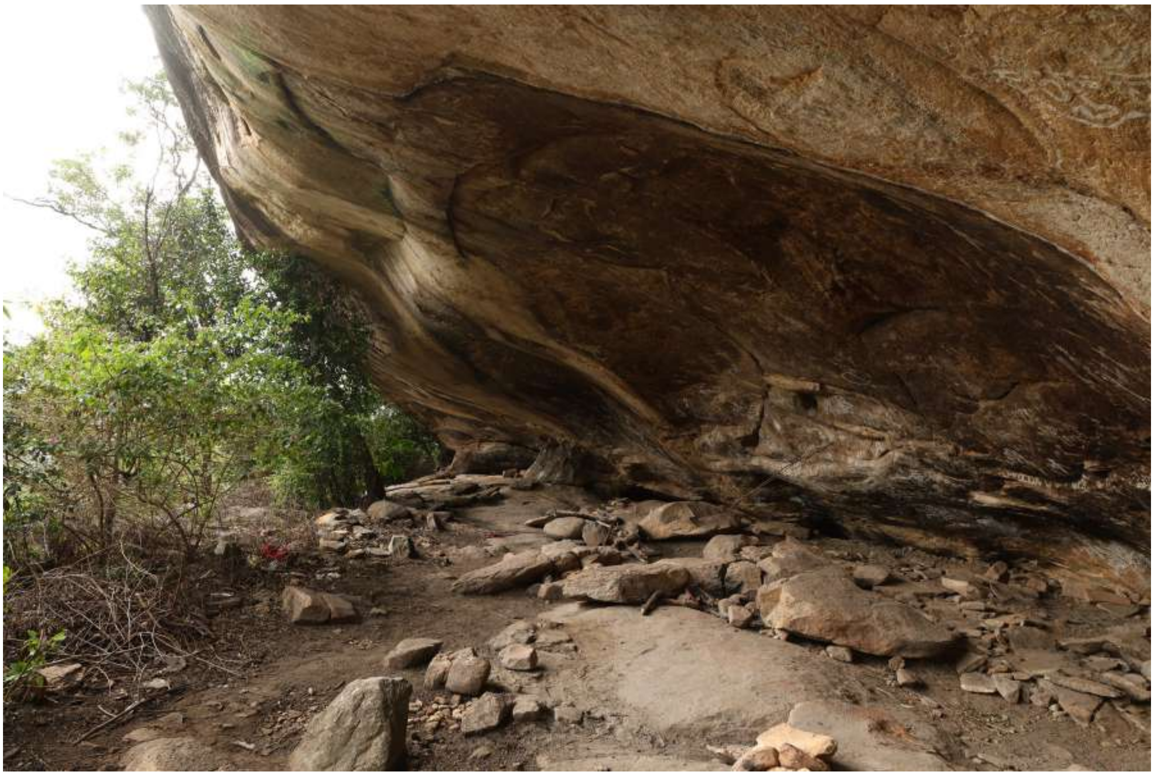


Fig. 4.43.1 General view of the rock shelter

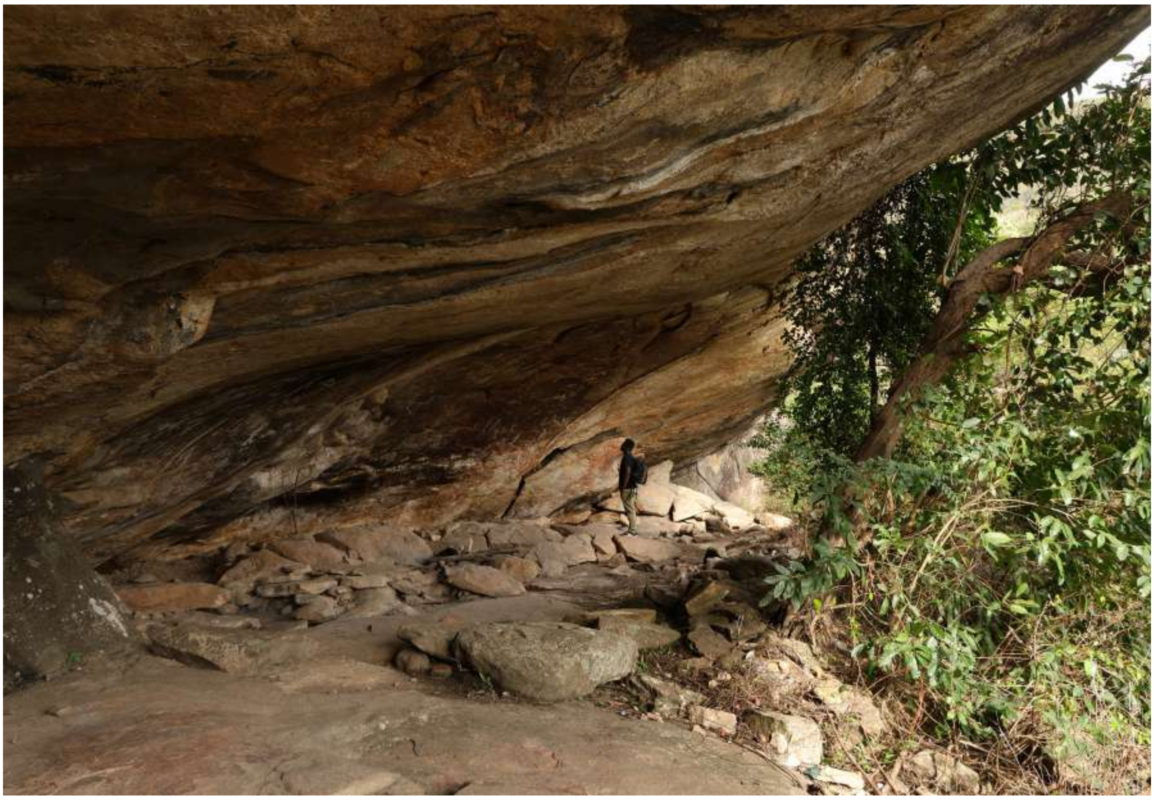


Fig. 4.43.2 General view of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter

The total painted surface is about 10.90 m and the total length of the rock shelter is about 64 m and the total height of the inclined surface is about 8 m. The vertical face of the shelter is about 7 m. The total painted area covers 10x8 m.

Description

In this rock shelter, many paintings are painted in red and white pigment. This shelter contains several groups of paintings and individual images also. The human figures, animal figures, geometric symbols and bird figurines are drawn. Paintings like humans riding on horse with weapons, group of animals, man stands with bow and arrow, humans holding hands and dancing, four humans are carrying a dead body, and memorial to the dead people, humans holding weapons and fighting each other, a man riding on an elephant, hand prints, hill related drawings and geometrical symbols are drawn here. Many of the paintings are faded and not clearly visible.

The overall images represented in the rock shelter consist of animal, geometrical, human, animal riders, zigzag pattern, elephant, flora, hand sign, horse, deer, bull, cow, tiger and tree.

Panel Description

The paintings are in white pigment. These paintings are faded and not seen clearly. An animal figure is seen which has a massive body and long trunks are clearly seen. It might be an elephant. Near to this another figure is painted, but it is unidentified (Figs. 4.43.3a-4.43.3b).

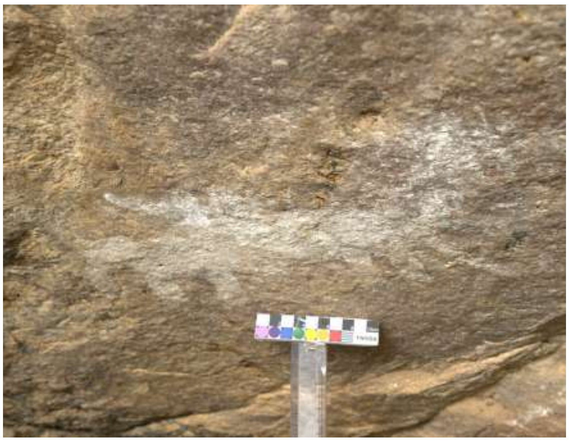


Fig. 4.43.3a Animal like sign

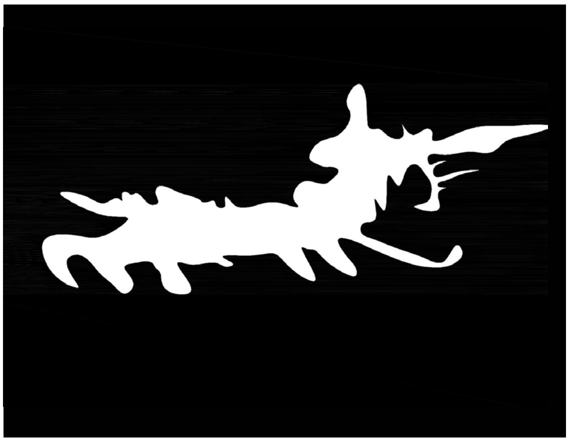


Fig. 4.43.3b Animal like sign

The paintings are in white. These paintings are not seen clearly. Human figures and tree like objects are drawn here. The humans are standing one by one on the tree like object. They are standing in different positions (Figs. 4.43.4a-4.43.4b).

A geometric symbol was drawn here in white (Figs. 4.43.5a-4.43.5b).

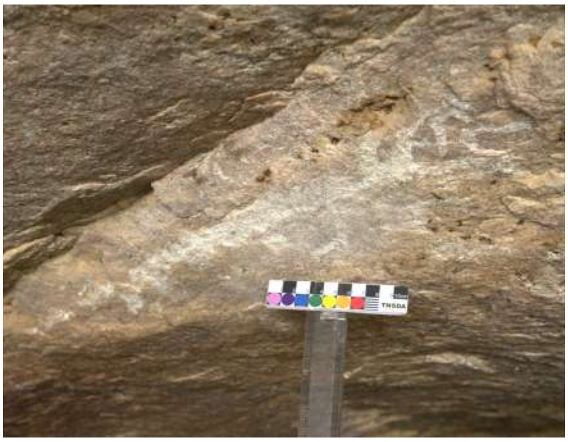


Fig. 4.43.4a Unidentified

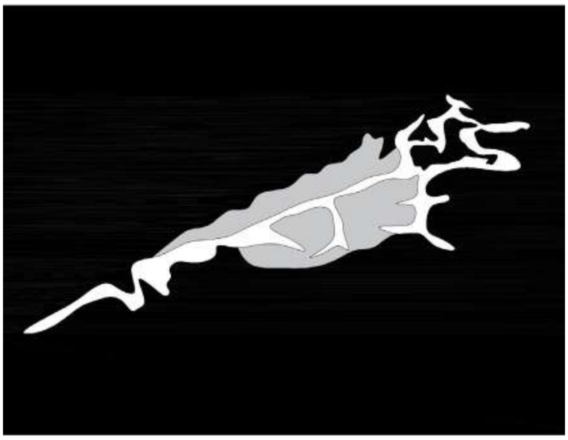


Fig. 4.43.4b Unidentified

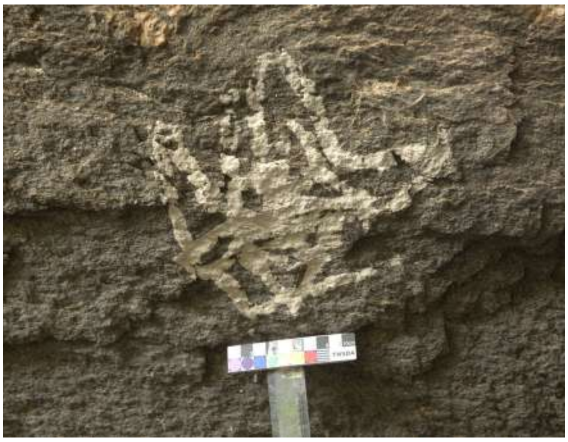


Fig. 4.43.5a Geometrical sign

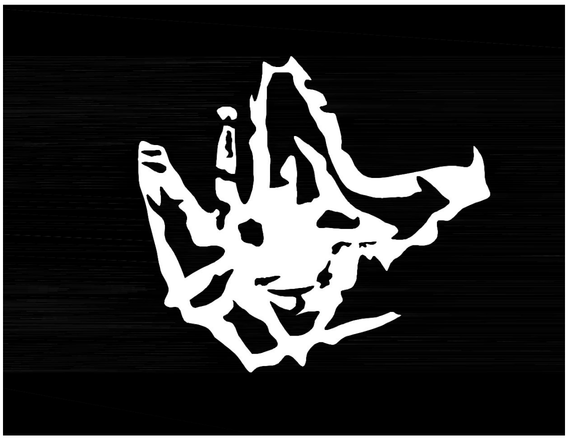


Fig. 4.43.5b Geometrical sign

In this panel, paintings are drawn in white pigment. A human figure is drawn. A man in walking position is shown with his right hand holding a bow like object and his left hand holds an arrow. His head is shown like an animal's. He is walking from right to left. (Figs. 4.43.6a-4.43.6b).

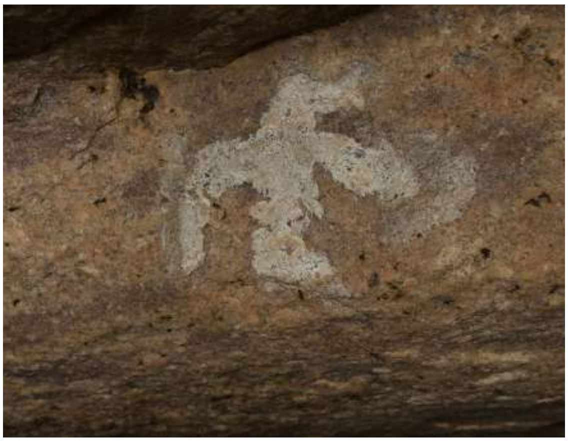


Fig. 4.43.6a Human like sign

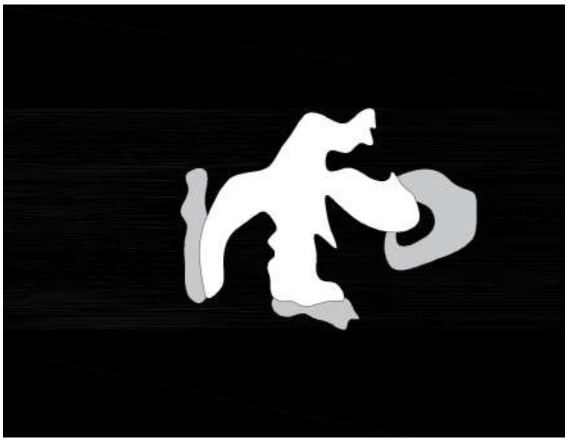


Fig. 4.43.6b Human like sign

The rock shelter paintings are white in colour. In this painting, the human form is drawn in a vertical position, standing on an animal (Figs. 4.43.7a-4.43.7b).

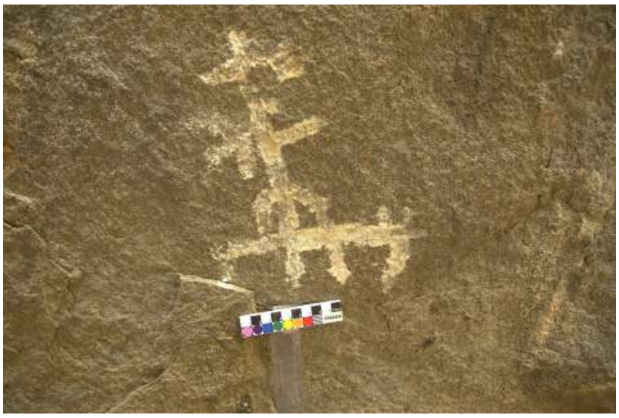


Fig. 4.43.7a Animal rider

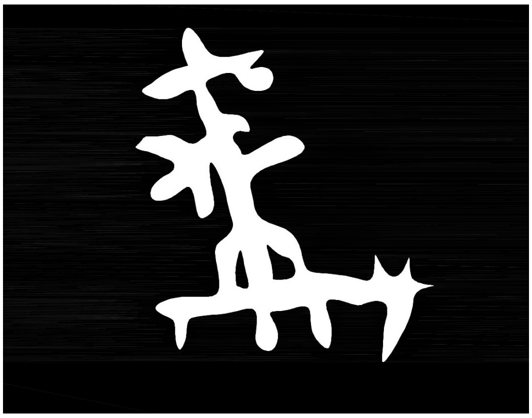


Fig. 4.43.7b Animal rider

These paintings are faded and not seen clearly. In this picture, three animal figures are drawn. Paintings are painted in a vertical position. At first, a horse figure was drawn at the centre. A deer figure is seen above this horse (Figs. 4.43.8a-4.43.8b).

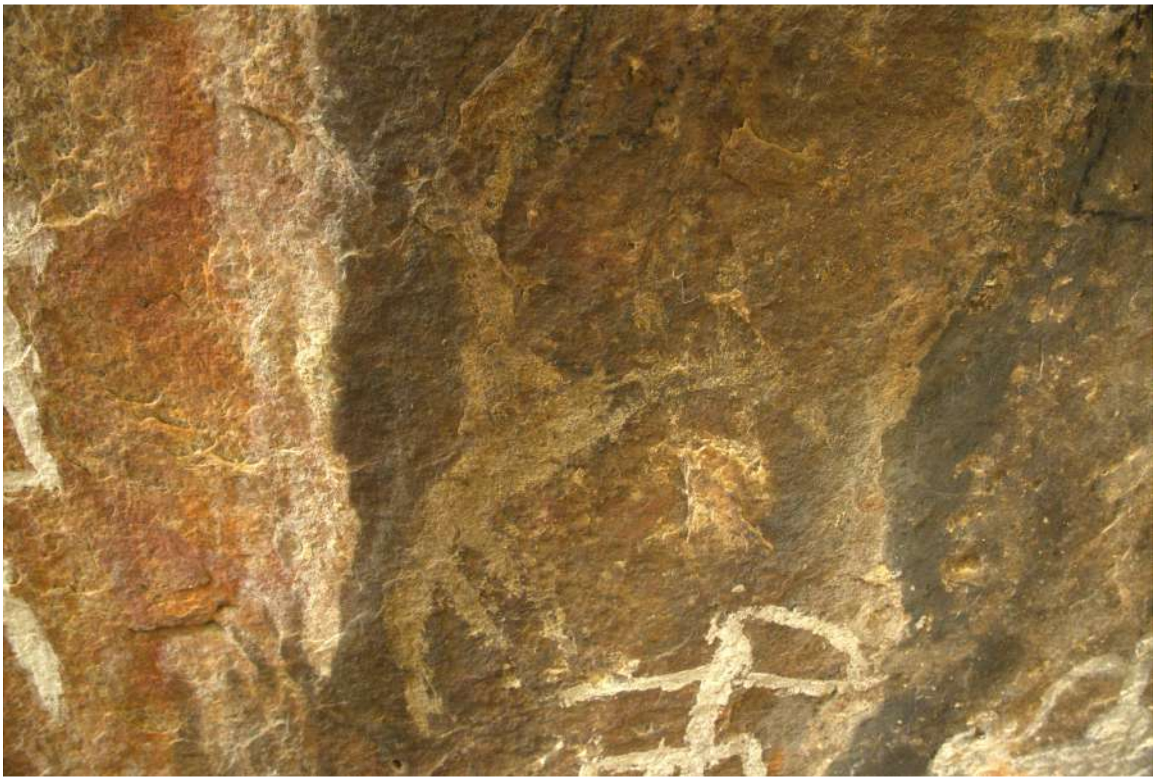


Fig. 4.43.8a Humans and animal rider

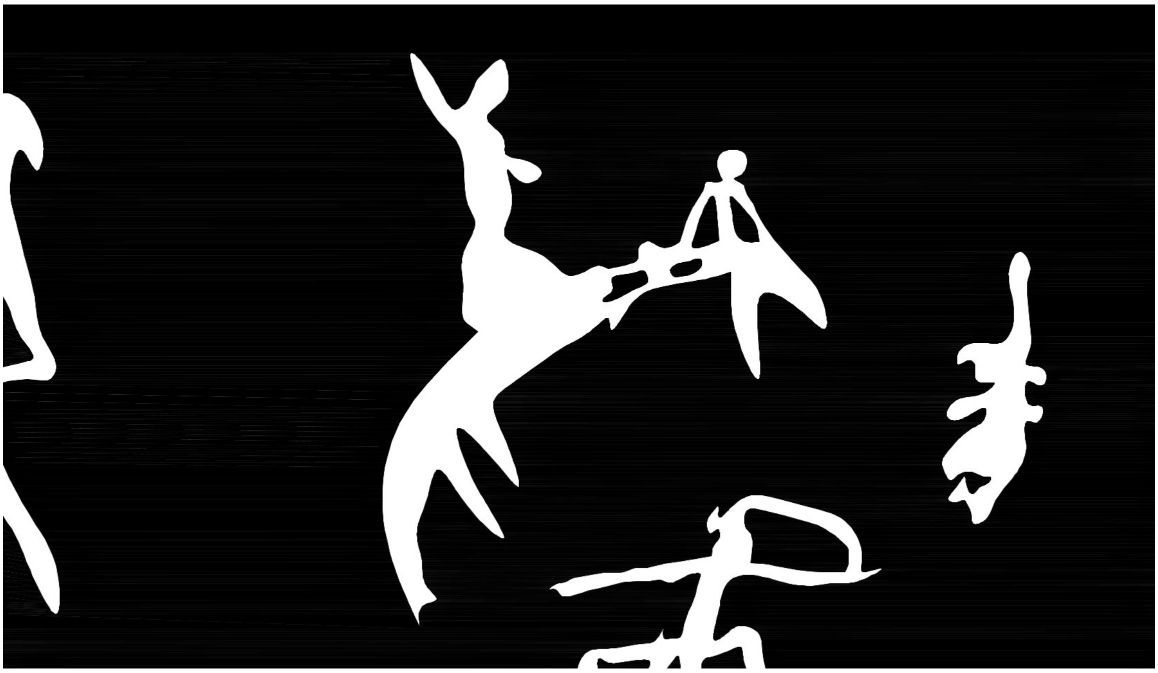


Fig. 4.43.8b *Humans and animal rider*

These paintings are faded and not seen clearly. The paintings of animal figures are drawn here. The two deer figures are shown in jumping or running postures. Behind this, a tiger is drawn in running position and looks like hunting a deer. Near to this, another animal is painted that looks like a rhinoceros (Figs. 4.43.9a-4.43.9b).

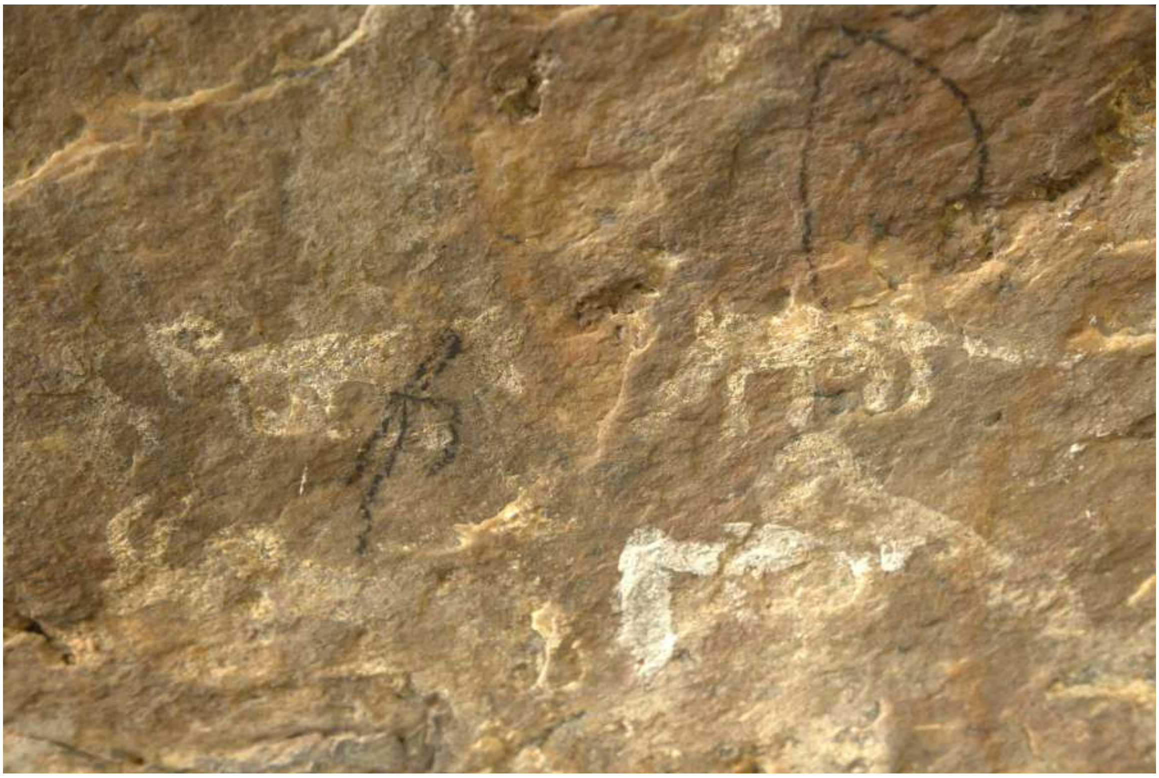


Fig. 4.43.9a *Animals*

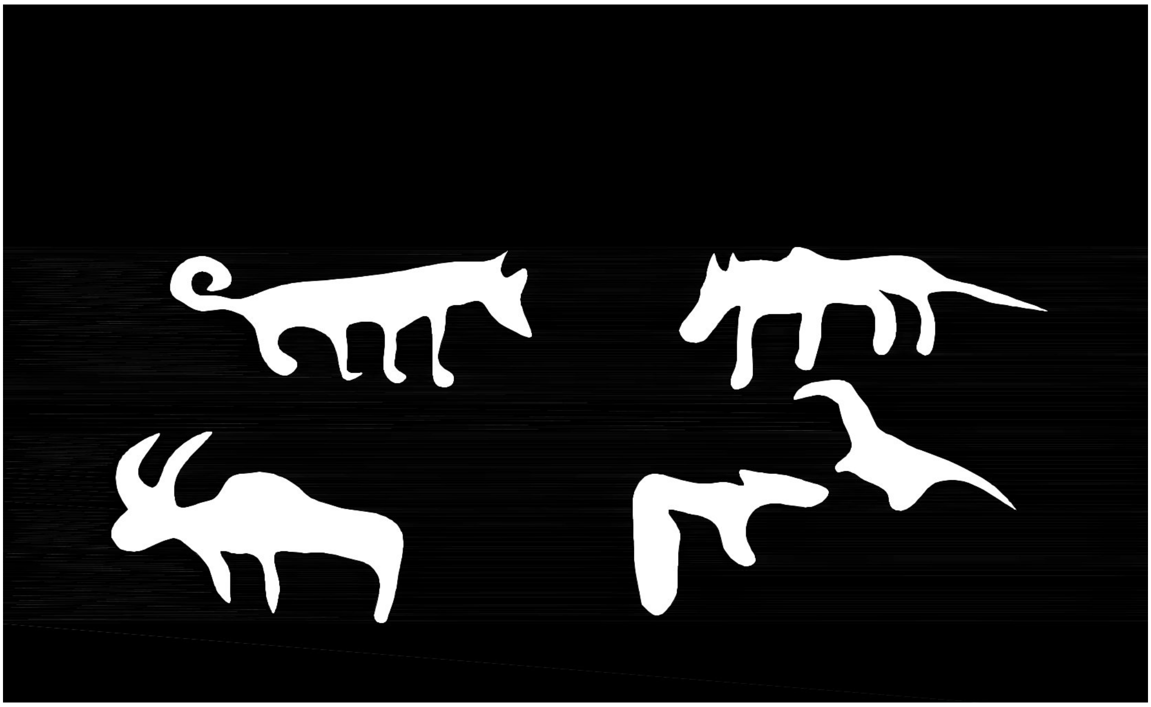


Fig. 4.43.9b *Animals*

In this panel, paintings are drawn in white pigment. In this painting, an elephant is noticed. It has a massive body and a long trunk. It might be a baby elephant. Other paintings are faded and not clearly visible (Figs. 4.43.10a-4.43.10b).

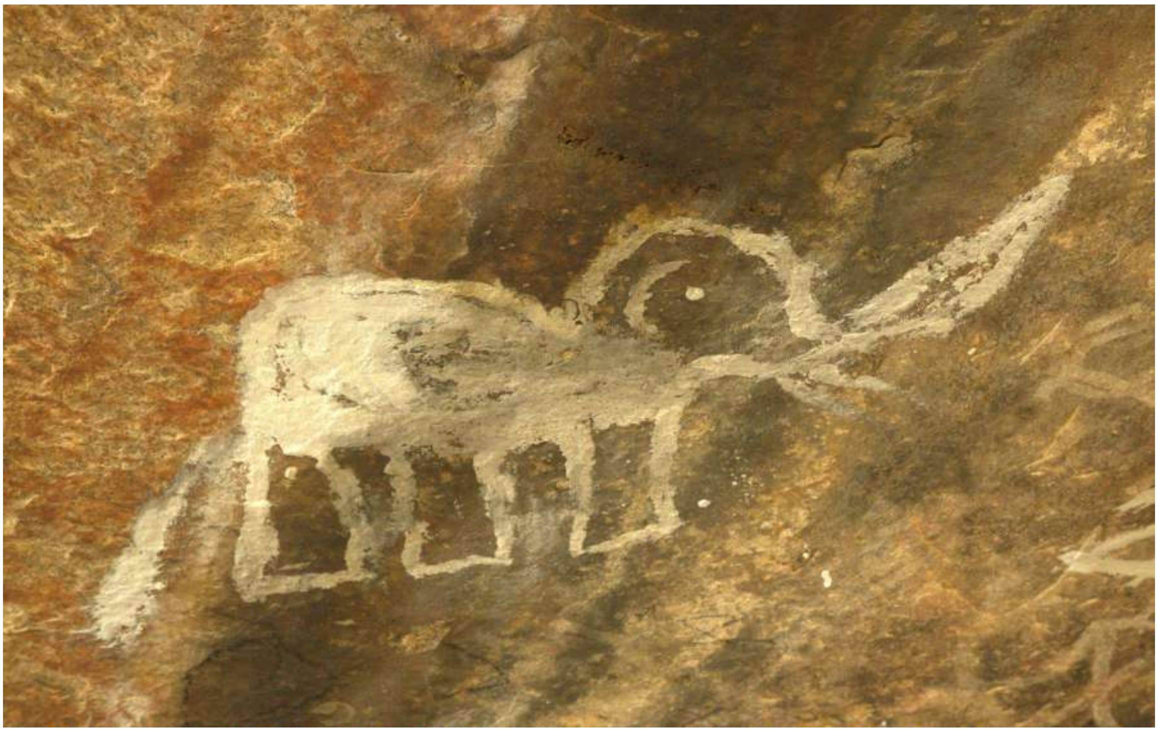


Fig. 4.43.10a *Elephant*

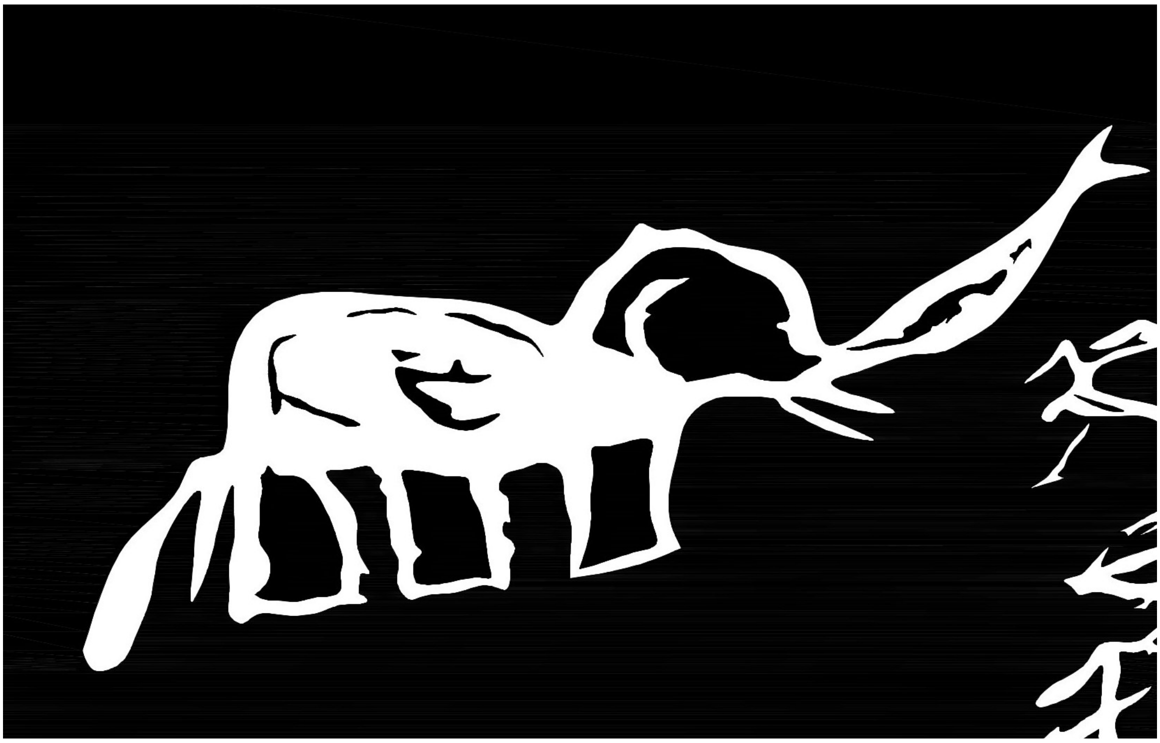


Fig. 4.43.10b *Elephant*

The paintings are made of white pigment. In this panel, paintings are shown in a horizontal position. The geometric symbols are drawn here. The symbols of five vertical lines joined at one end, plus symbol and wavy patterns resemble a hill or mountain. Many symbols are faded and not clearly seen (Figs. 4.43.11a-4.43.11b).

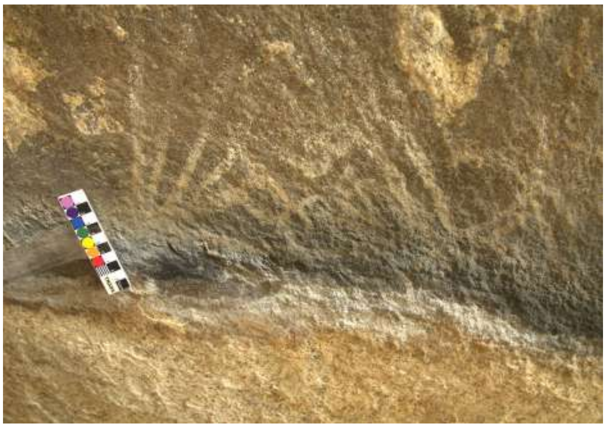


Fig. 4.43.11b Zigzag pattern

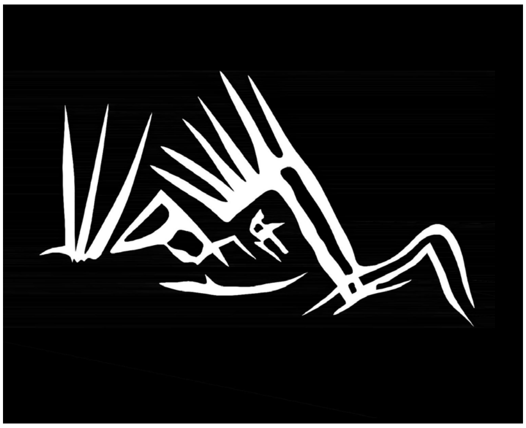


Fig. 4.43.11a Zigzag pattern

The paintings are in red and white pigments. In this cluster, more than 30 figures are drawn. Paintings are faded and not clearly seen. The white paintings are painted overlapping the red painting. In these paintings, human figures are only drawn here. At the top, 14 members standing horizontally holding each other's hands and in a position of dancing are shown. Next to it, four humans are mourning around a person who is in a supine position. Two humans are walking in front of these four humans and they hold something in their hands with a decorated head. Besides, ten humans are scattered and joined into small groups taking wooden pieces and walking from one end to another. The entire scene reflects the ritual performed at the burial ground (Figs. 4.43.12a-4.43.12b).

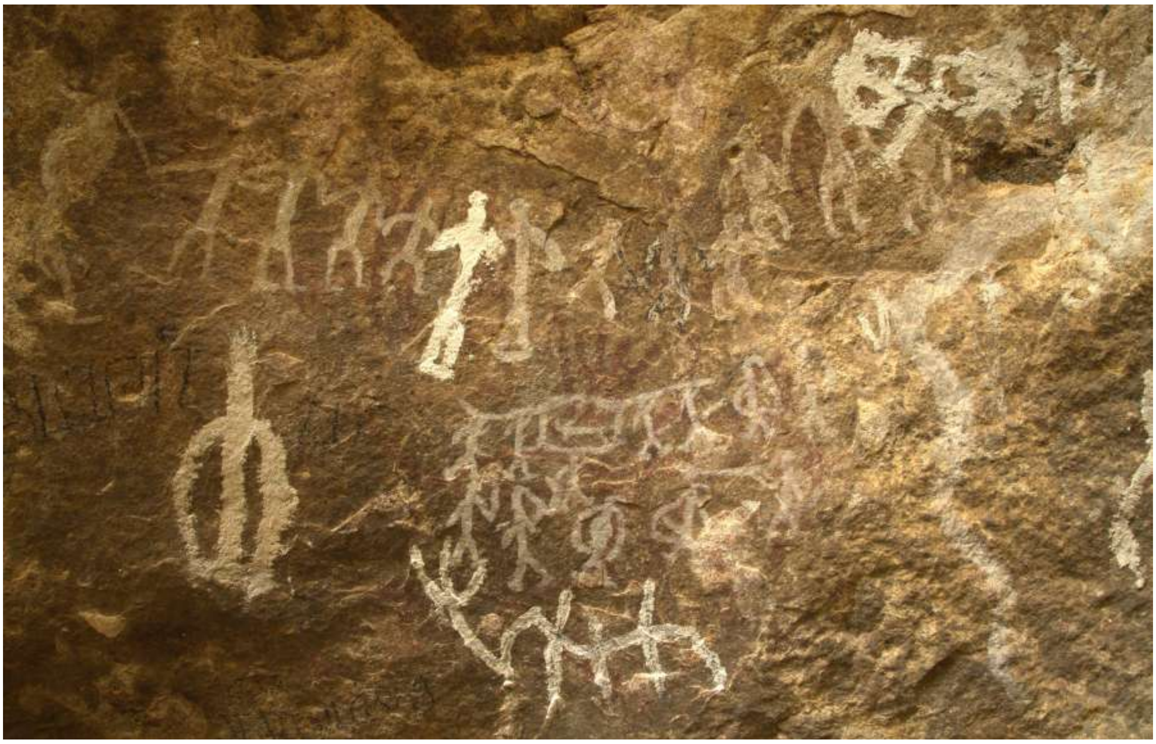


Fig. 4.43.12a Humans and animal riders

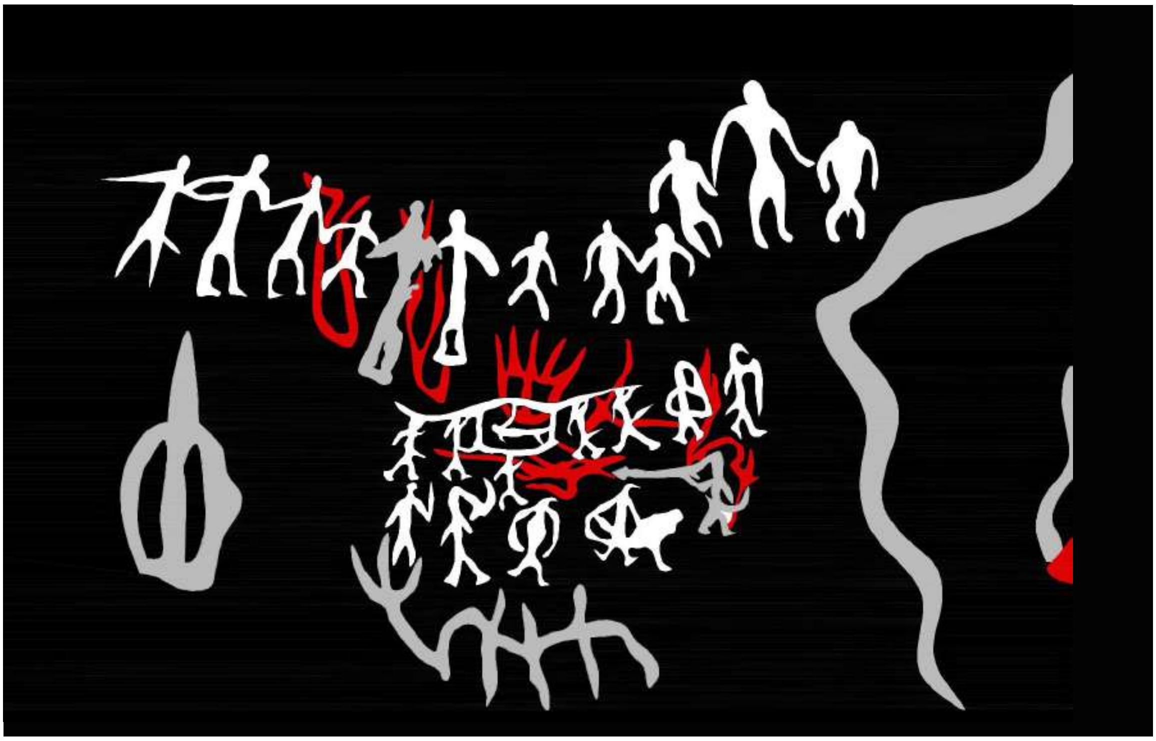


Fig. 4.43.12b Humans and animal riders

On the right side, five humans are holding hands and seem they are in a dancing position. Near to this, a human stands with raising and holding a sword-like weapon. A geometric symbol is drawn below this picture (Figs. 4.43.13a-4.43.13b).

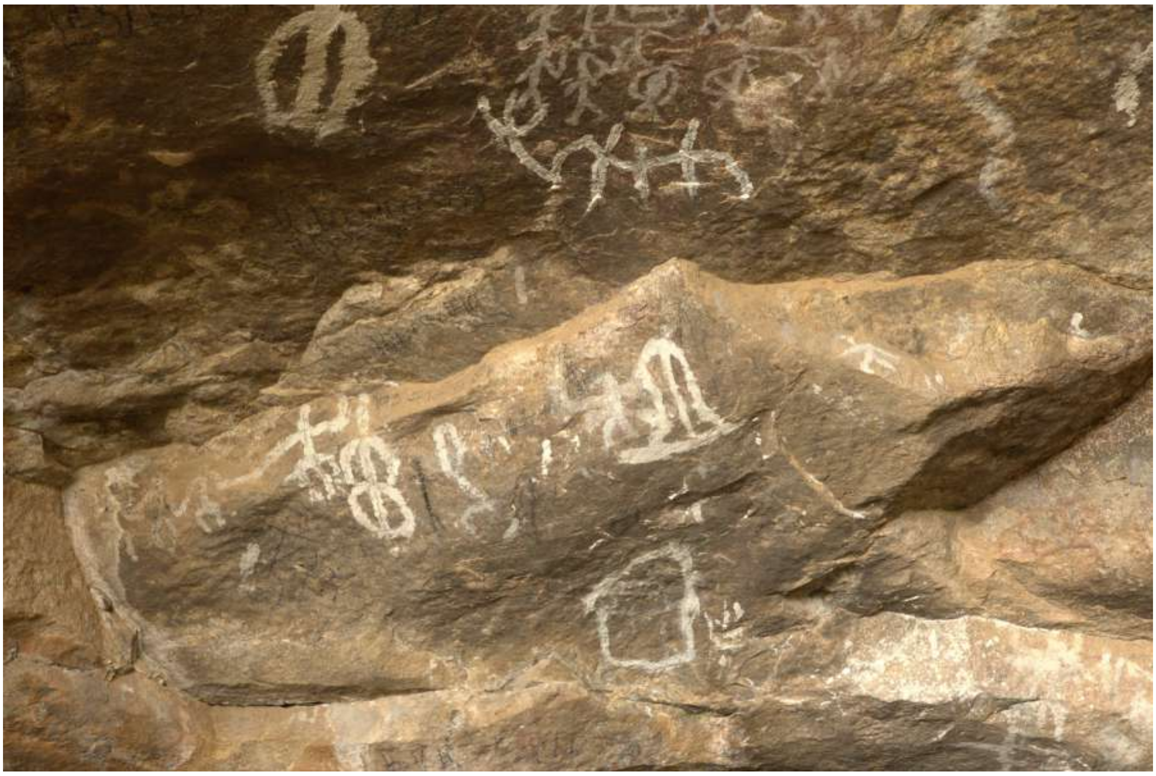


Fig. 4.43.13a Humans

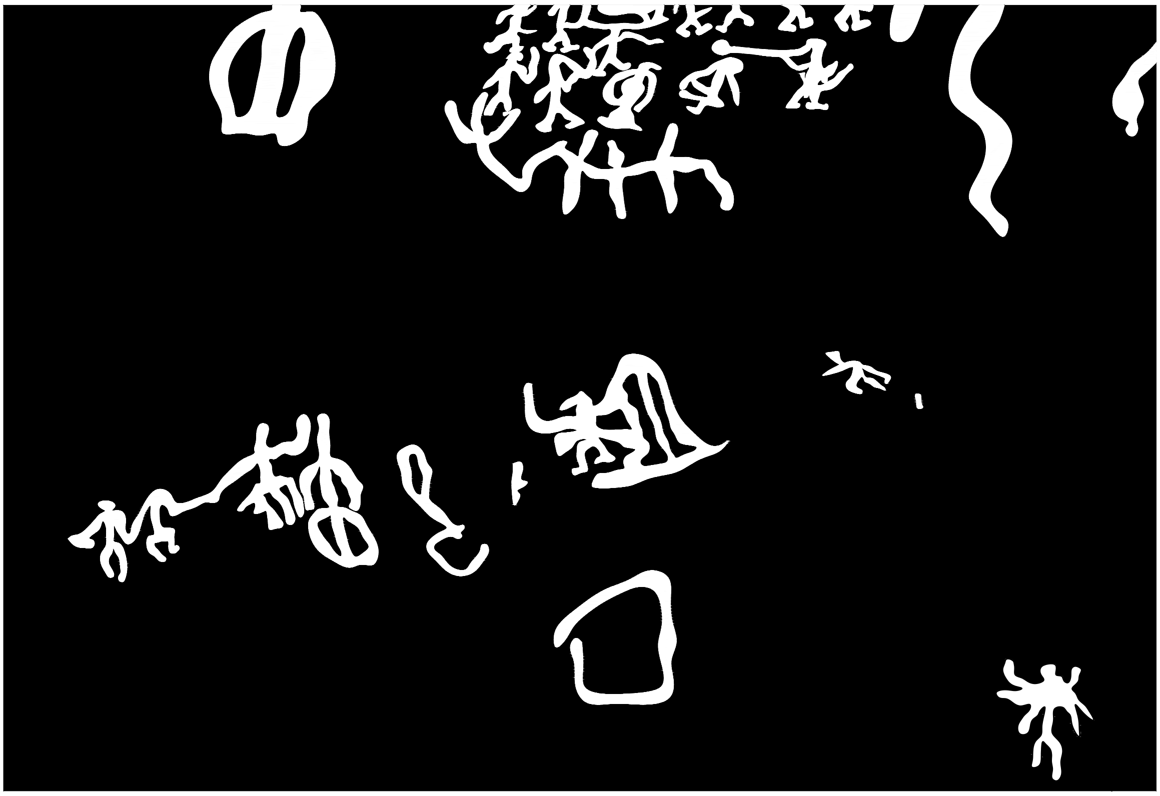


Fig. 4.43.13b Humans

In this panel, a human and animal figure are drawn. The elephant has a massive body and long trunks and a man mounted on the elephant holds a weapon in his right hand (Figs. 4.43.14a-4.43.14b).

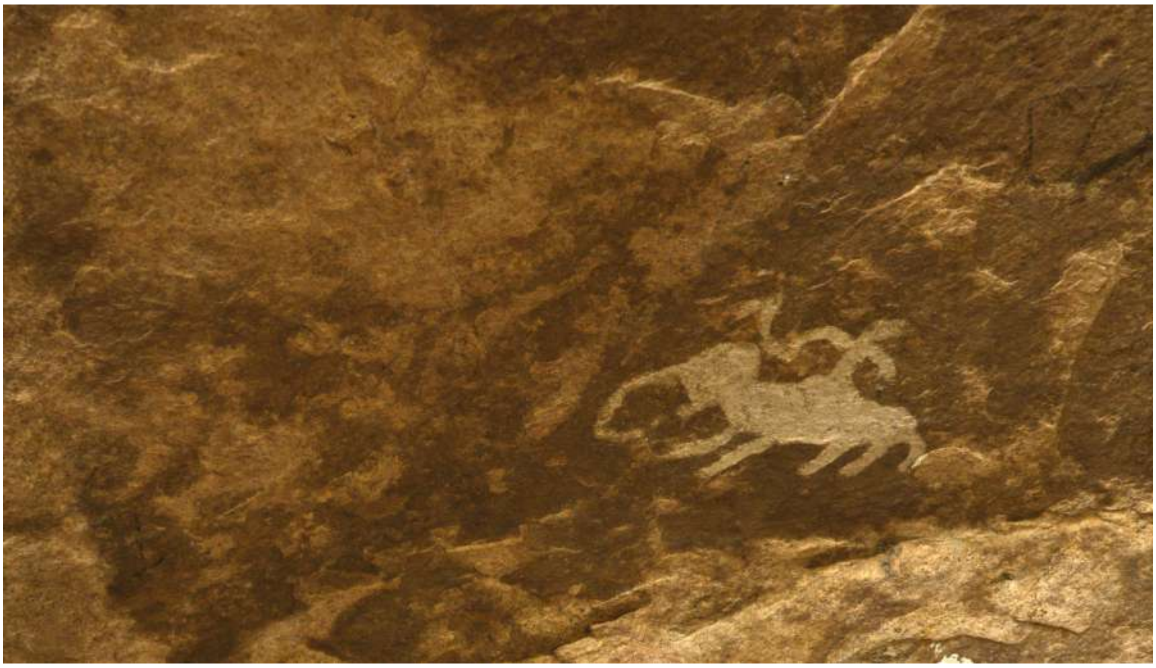


Fig. 4.43.14a Elephant rider

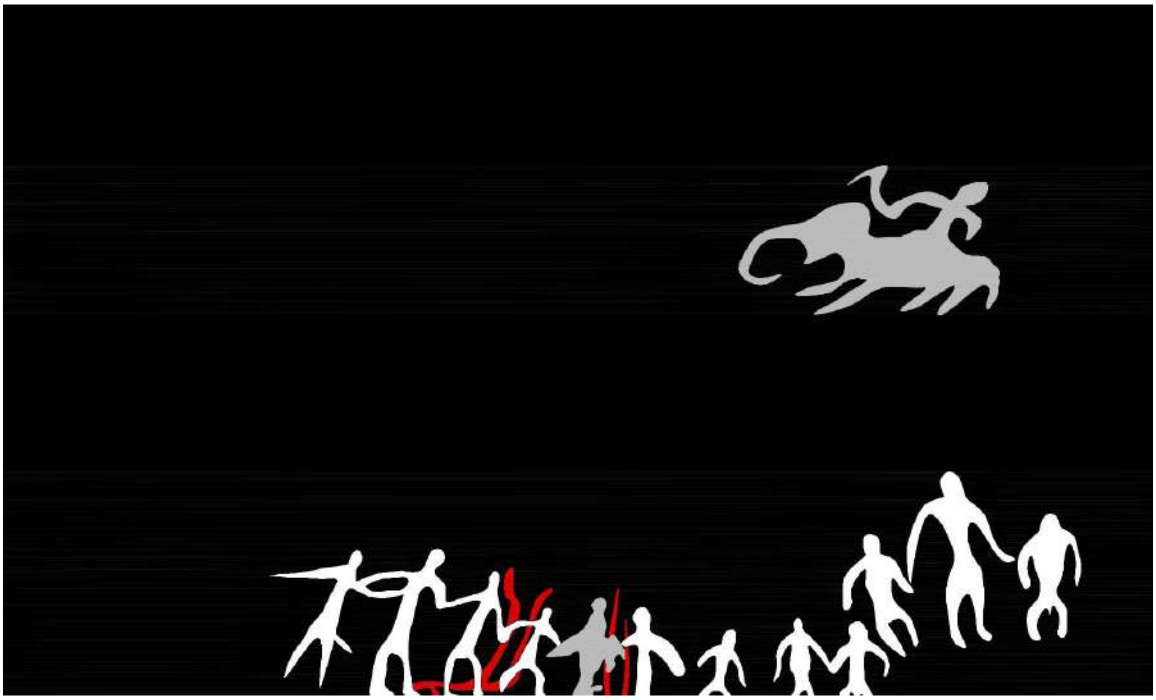


Fig. 4.43.14b Elephant rider

These paintings are faded and not clearly seen. There are three hand prints and some unidentified symbols (Figs. 4.43.15a-4.43.15b).

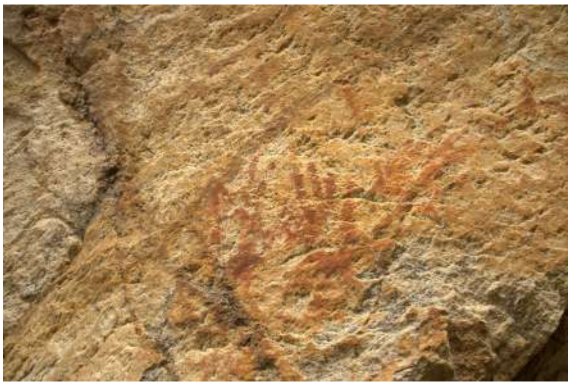


Fig. 4.43.15a *Hand sign and unidentified scenes*

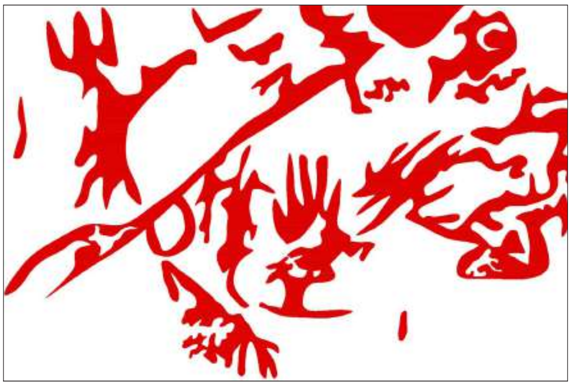


Fig. 4.43.15b *Hand sign and unidentified scenes*

In this panel, a human and bird figures are seen. At the top, two butterflies are drawn beautifully and their inner parts and wings are drawn clearly. A peacock imagery with a long neck and body is depicted. Near to this peacock, a girl figurine is seen without-stretched arms and legs. She is well dressed and looks to a fairy (Figs. 4.43.16a-4.43.16b).

In this panel, the paintings are faded and not clearly seen. The white paintings are painted overlapping the red painting. In this cluster, more than 50 human and animal figures are drawn. The red paintings are faded and not clearly seen. Animal figures of elephant, horse, deer, bull, cow and tiger are drawn here. An elephant and a tiger are

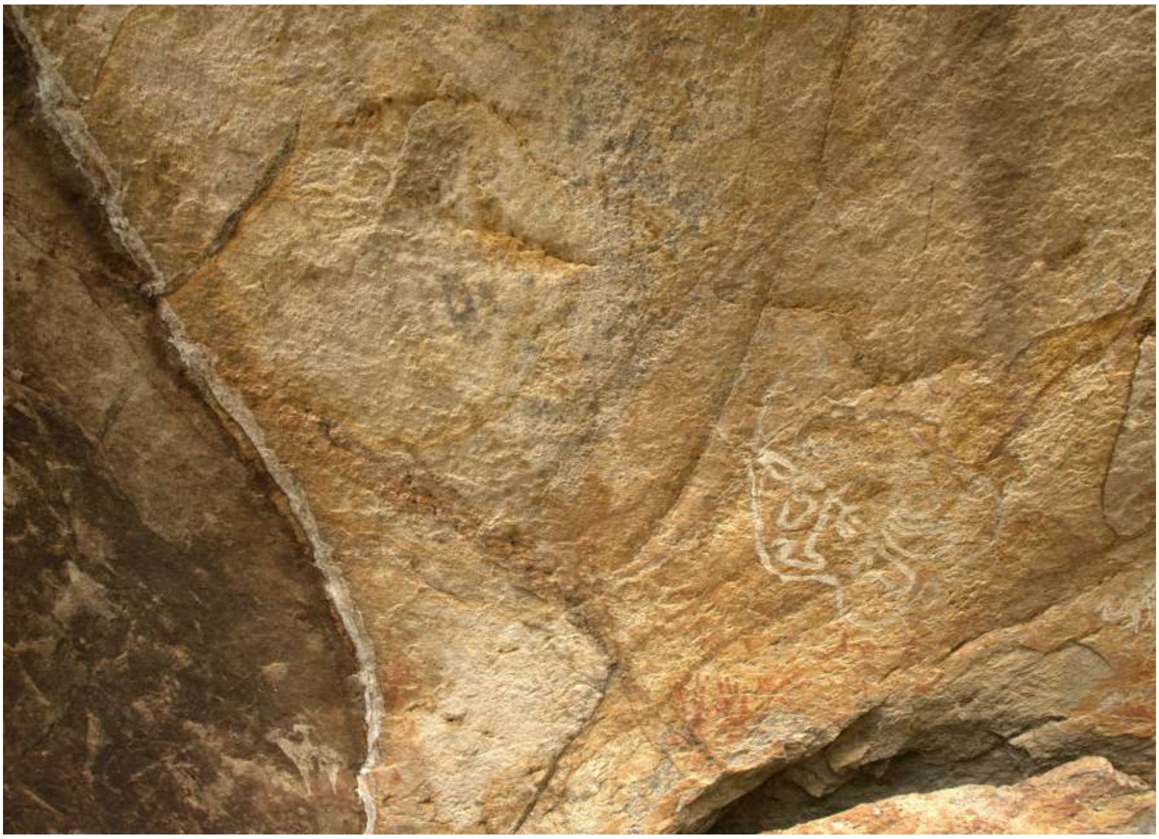


Fig. 4.43.16a Human, bird and peacock

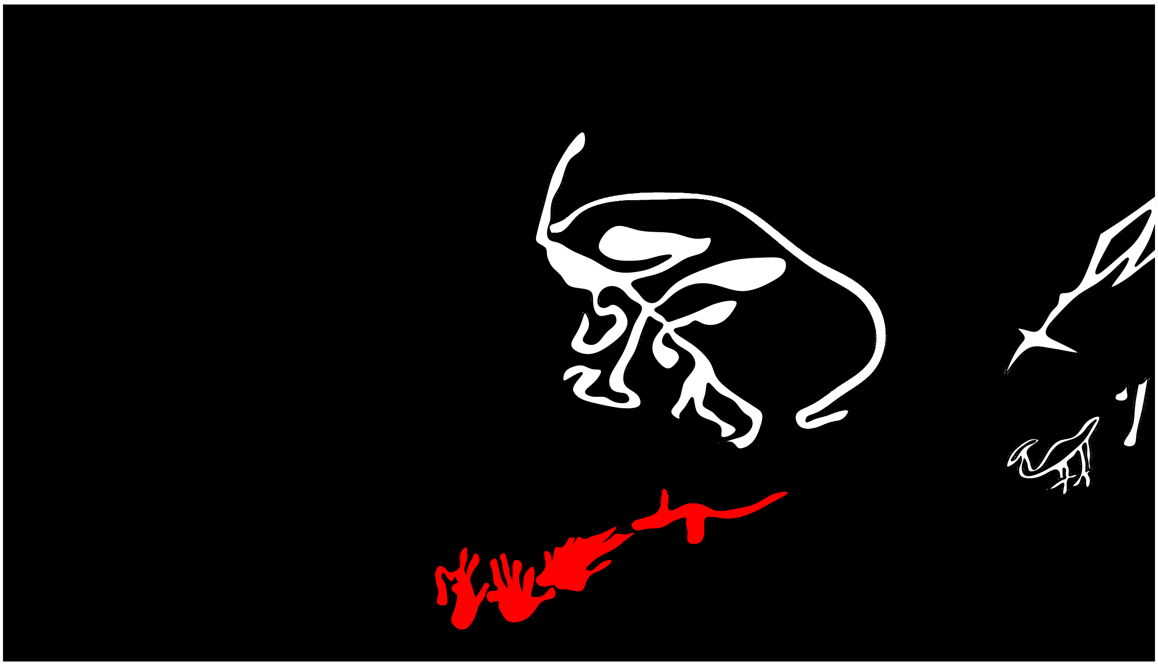


Fig. 4.43.16b *Human, bird and peacock*

standing facing each other. A man holding bow and arrow, a man sitting on a animal and holding weapon, two humans standing facing each other and holding weapons, a man with a sword at his hip is shown running by holding a spear in his left hand and right hand holds a shield, a human stands and holding swords on his hand and he has a sword on his hip, another man is walking and holds a long weapon, a man bent down and holds an animal tail, six human figures are standing and holding a weapon in their hands, opposite to these figures on the left side 10 humans are standing on the animal and holding weapons and 2 humans are holding rope over his head. At last, two bird figures are drawn. Some figures are drawn in white dotted lines (Figs. 4.43.17a-4.43.17b).

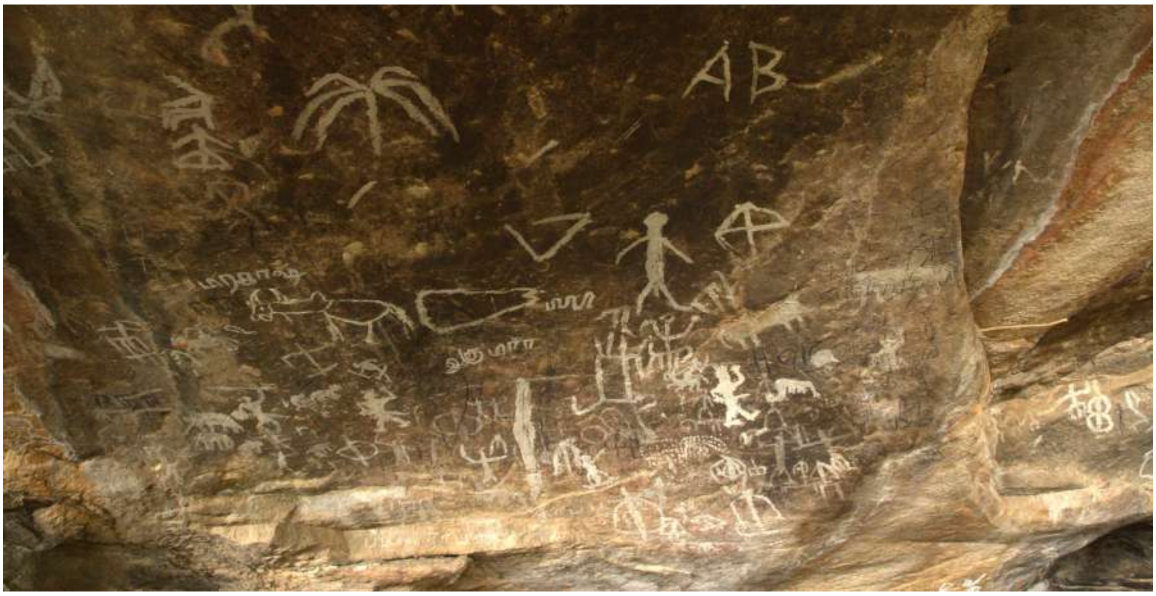


Fig. 4.43.17a *Human and animal figures*

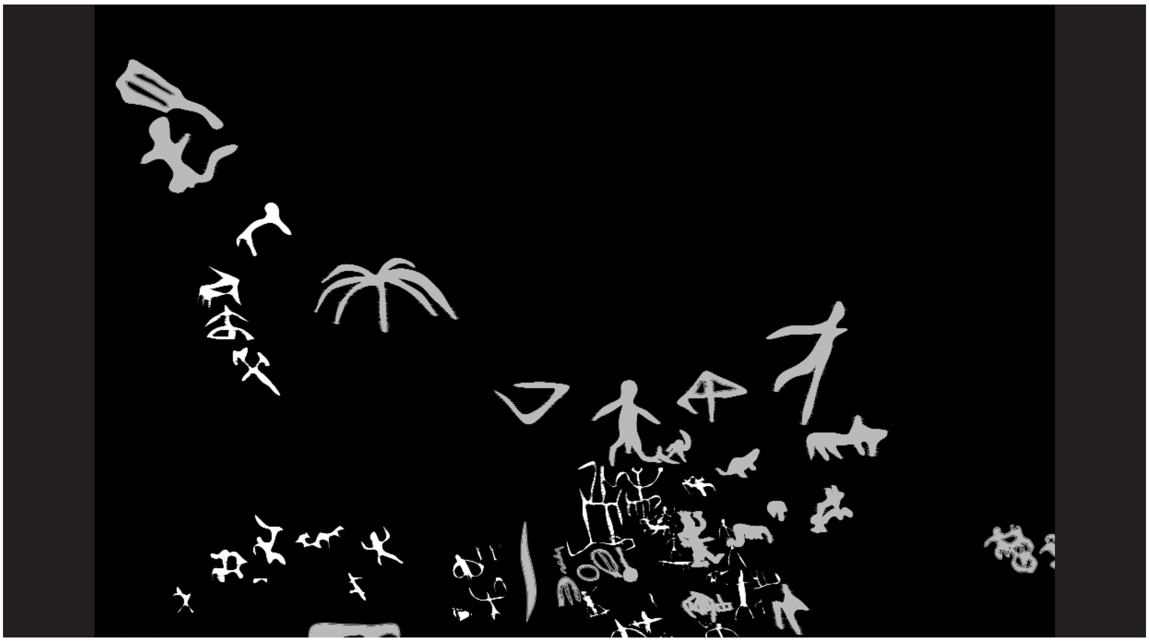


Fig. 4.43.17b Human and animal figures

Paintings are faded and not clearly seen. White paintings are painted overlapping the red painting. At present, these paintings are disturbed and overwritten by modern people. Animals and human figurines are drawn here. The first painting is having four humans carrying a palanquin with a human standing beside holding weapons. Opposite to it, four humans are shown riding a horse and holding weapons. On the right side, a cattle figure is drawn. At the end of the rock, a small group of 12 humans carrying someone and walking are depicted. Near to this, a girl figure and two bird figures are drawn. On the left side, above this picture, 6 humans are shown by holding weapons (Figs. 4.43.18a-4.43.18b).

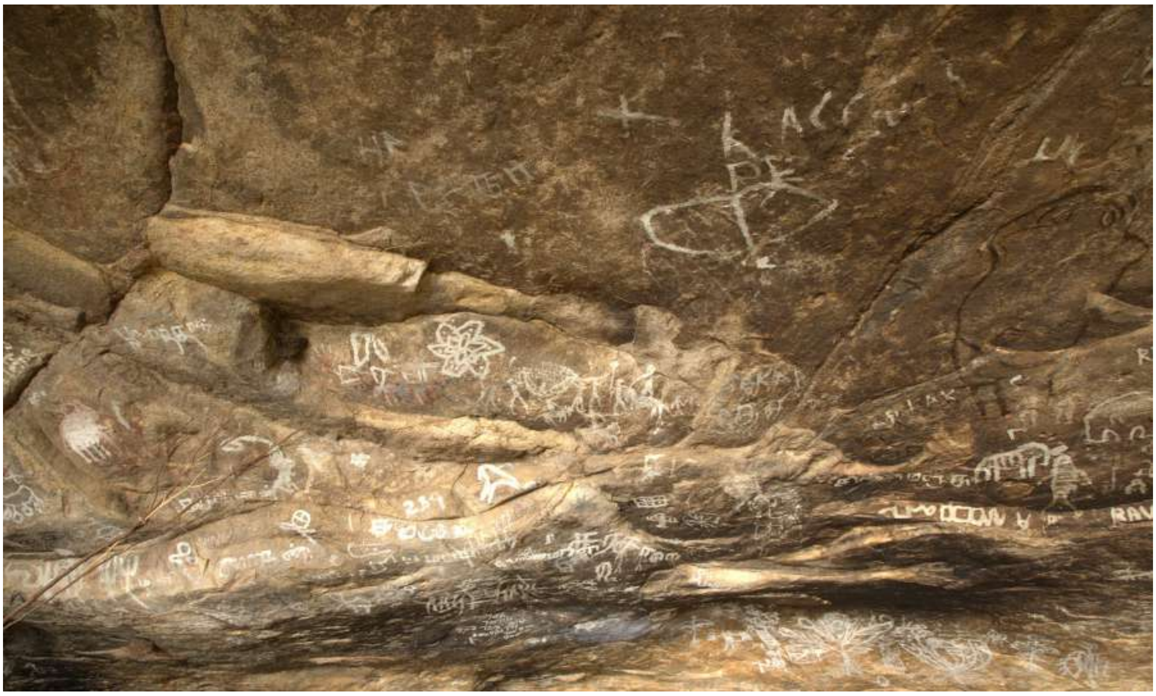


Fig. 4.43.18a Human, animal, flora designs

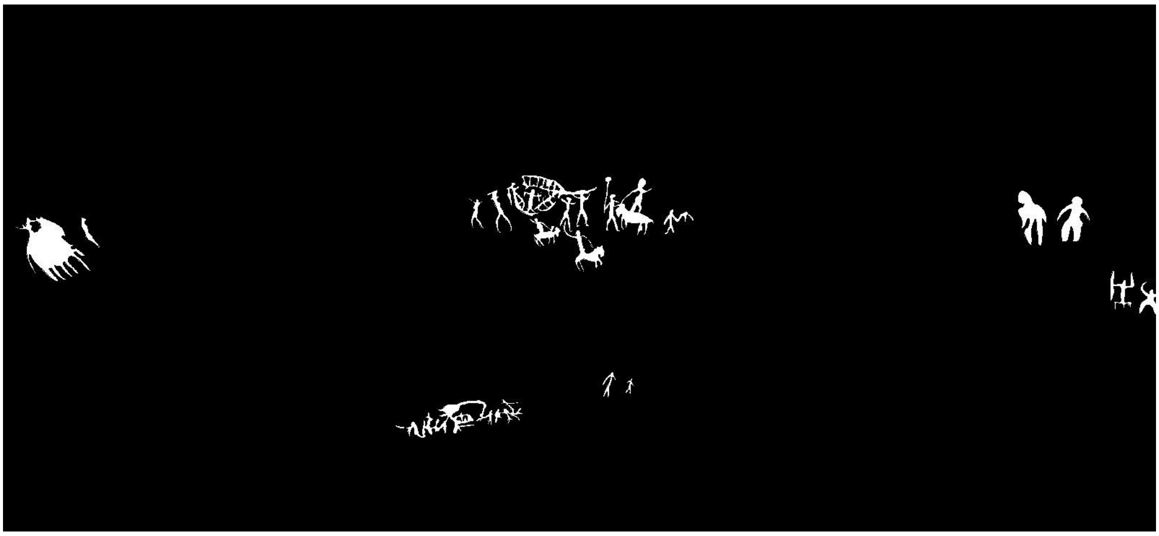


Fig. 4.43.18b *Human, animal and flora designs*

These paintings are faded and not clearly visible. Human figures and animal figures are drawn here (Figs. 4.43.19a-4.43.19b).

Fig. 4.43.19a *Human and animal*

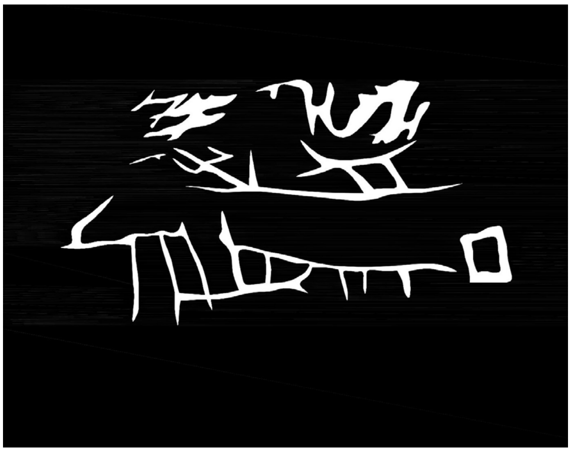


Fig. 4.43.19b *Human and animal*

In this panel, paintings are made with red ochre and white pigment. Thirteen human figures are drawn and their heads are decorated. Two human figures are holding a sword in their right hand and gada in their left hands meeting each other. A man stands between these two, near to this, an animal figure is drawn. Below this picture, a human stands and a deer like animal stands nearby. In this painting, humans are drawn in different postures and different styles. Some of the red and white paintings are faded and not clearly seen (Figs. 4.43.20a-4.43.20b).

In this panel, animal and human figures are painted in white pigment. The human figures, animal figures, bird figures and weapons are drawn here. A man stands with an animal by holding a rope around its head. Near to this, a long bird is seen. Below this, a man stands and holds a weapon in his hand (Figs. 4.43.21a-4.43.21b).

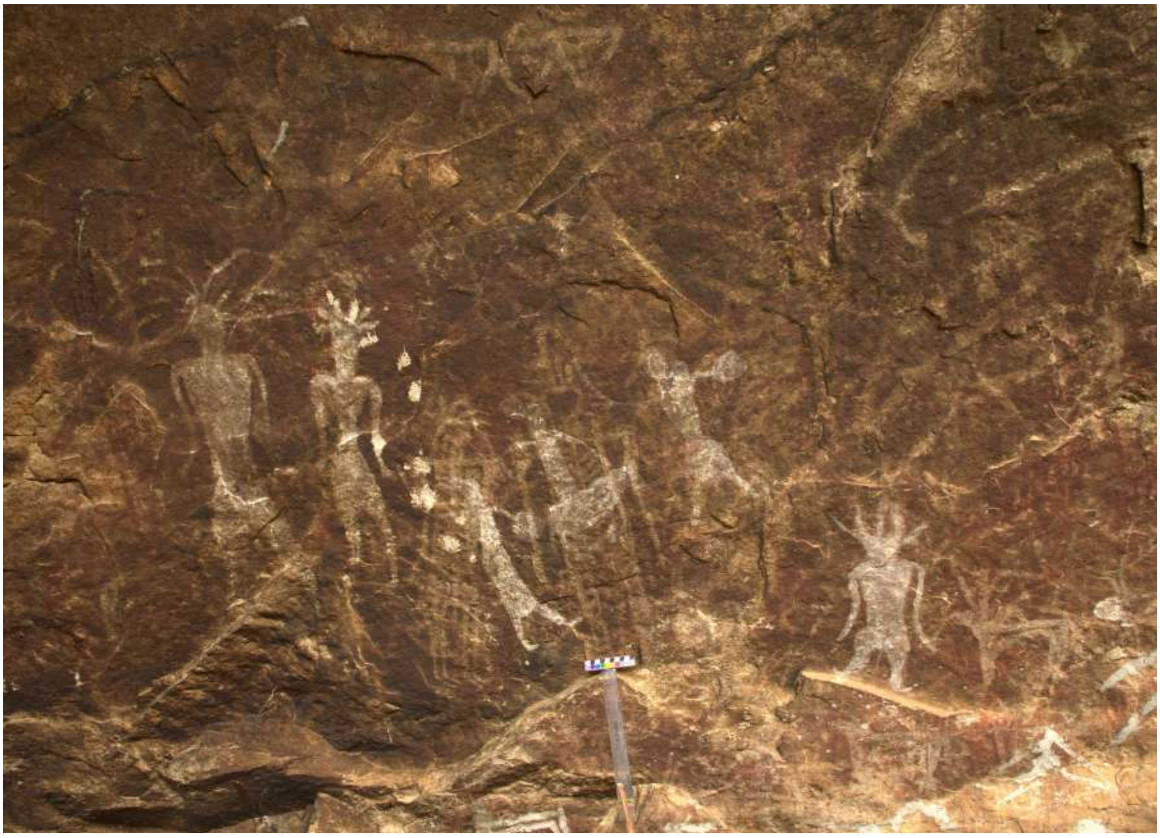


Fig. 4.43.20a *Humans, animal and animal rider*

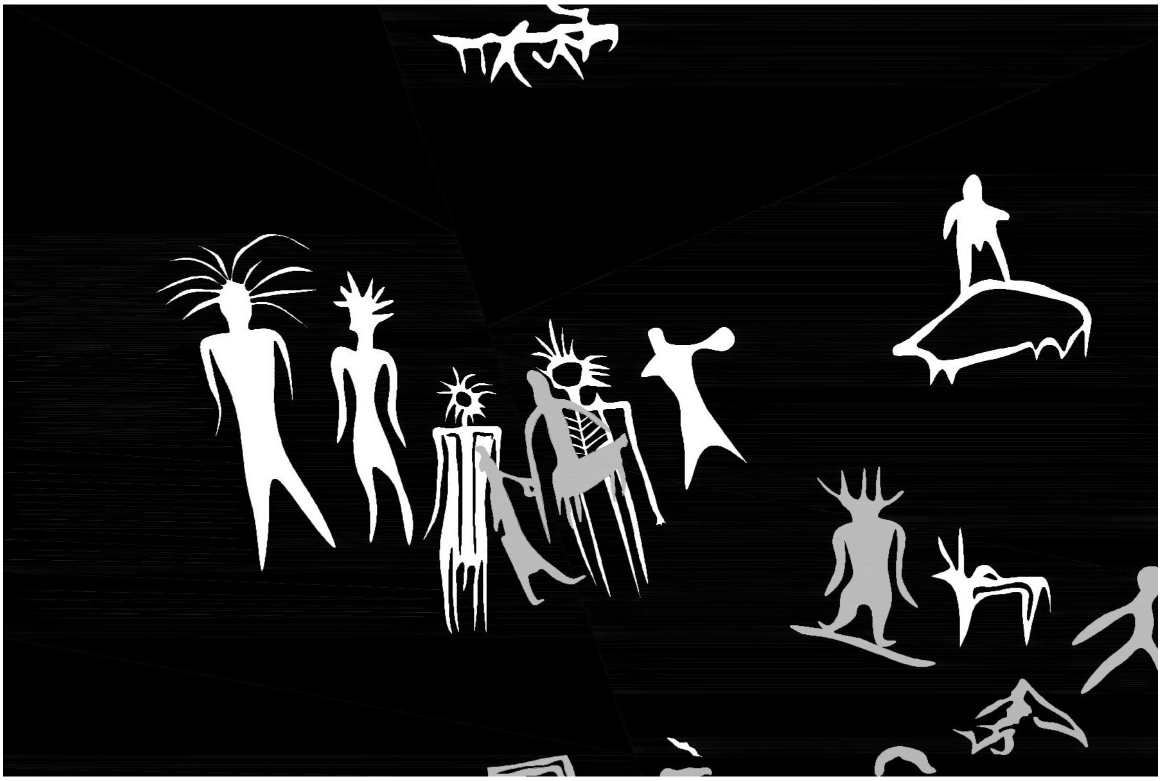


Fig. 4.43.20b *Humans, animal and animal rider*

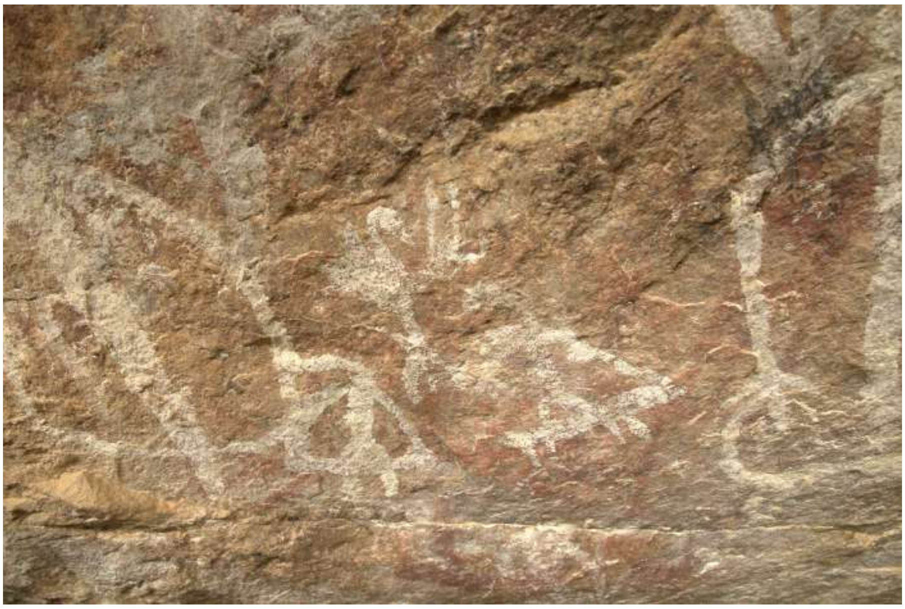


Fig. 4.43.21a Humans and animal riders

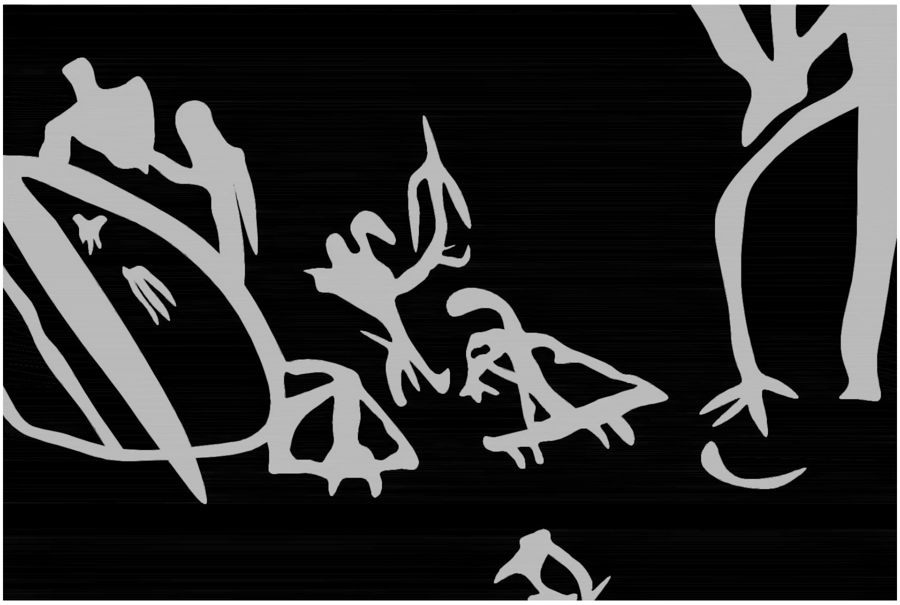
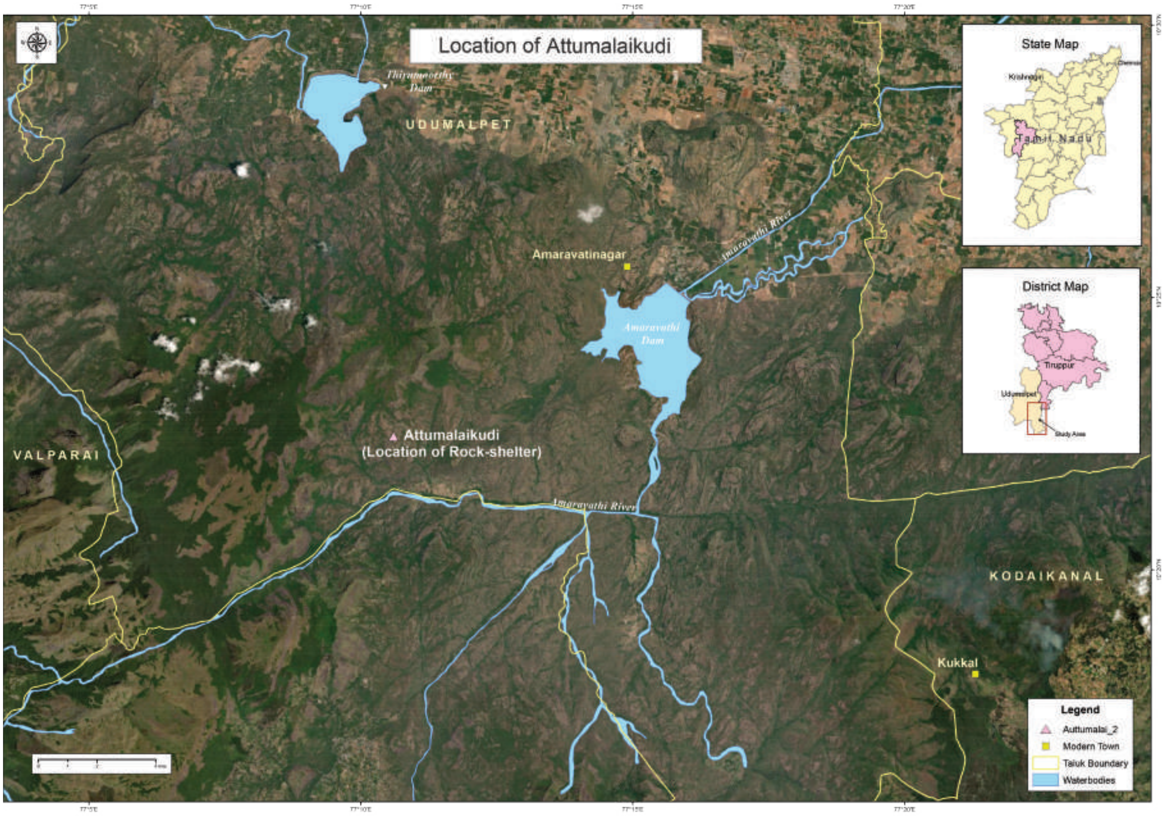


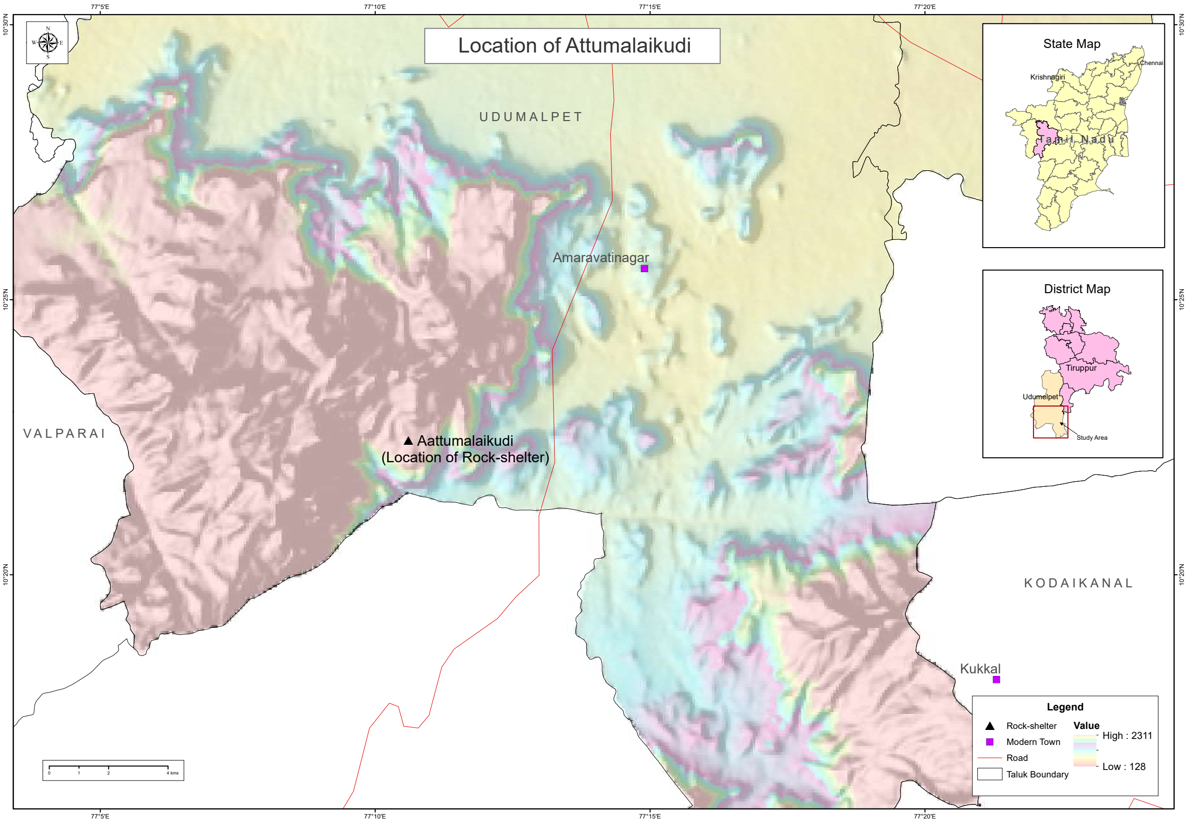
Fig. 4.43.21b Humans and animal riders

4.44 Attumalaikudi

Attumalaikudi (10.37407 N; 77.17671 E) lies at an altitude of 990 m AMSL. This village can be approached from Kodanthur, which lies 7 km Tamil Nadu check post, situated on the Udumalaipetti – Munar main road at a distance of 28 km from Udumalaipettai (Map 4.44.1-4.44.2). Dolmens are found at 5 localities (Fig. 4.44.2). The first one is noticed at the beginning of the village, all are in disturbed condition, and there are three dolmens. The second group consists of two dolmens located on the rocky surface at the entrance to the village. The third group consist of five dolmens, they are found before the *Ezuthuparai* (Fig. 4.44.1) which is located 500 m high above the village. Another group of dolmens is noticed further 200 m away from it close to *Ezuttuparai*. It is also known as *Neladichanparai* or *Nelmolachanparai*.


Location of Attumalaikudi
UDUMALPET
Thirumoorthy Dam
Amaravatinagar
Amaravathi Dam
Amaravathi River
Attumalaikudi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
VALPARAI
KODAIKANAL
Kukkal
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Tiruppur
Study Area
Legend
Auttumalai_2
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies

▸ *Map 4.44.1 Location of the rock shelter*


Location of Attumalaikudi
UDUMALPET
Amaravatinagar
Aattumalaikudi
(Location of Rock-shelter)
VALPARAI
KODAIKANAL
Kukkal
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Tiruppur
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
Value
High : 2311
Low : 128

▸ *Map 4.44.2 Location of the rock shelter*

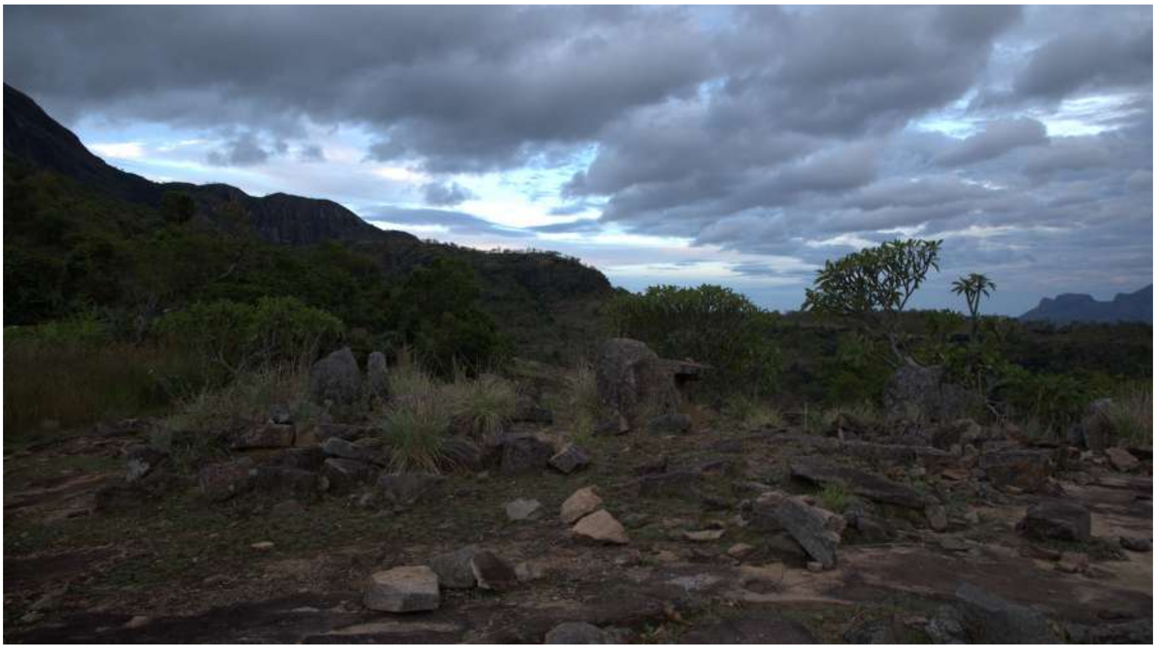


Fig. 4.44.1 General view of the rock shelter

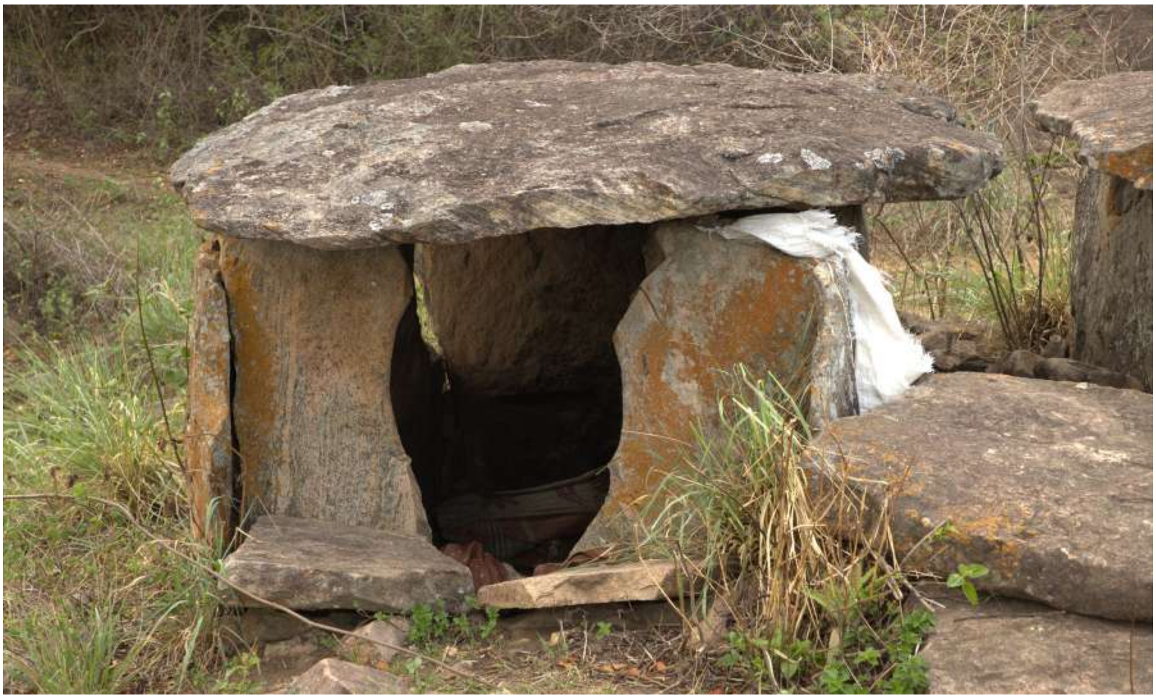


Fig. 4.44.2 General view of the dolmen

Description

In *Ezuthuparai,* there is a petroglyph with 42 lines engraved on the rock boulder in 3 lines. There are several dolmens here which are of Palani types having walls around the structure. Inside the enclosed wall-structure, a group of dolmens is situated. Besides dolmens, an inscription referring to Virakeralan is found engraved on the rocky surface in front of Karupasamy temple locally called as *Arali parai.*

Panel Description

42 straight vertical line marks were engraved on the rock surface. Among them, 5-6 lines are deeply engraved and the rest are shallow (Fig. 4.44.3a-4.44.3b).

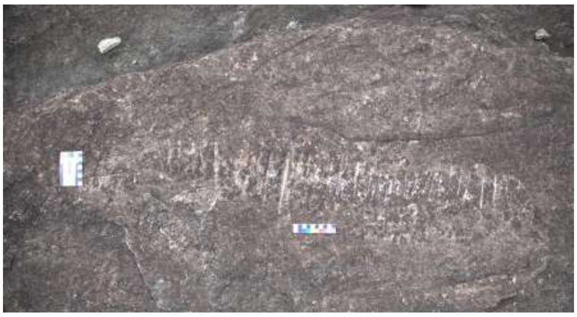


Fig. 4.44.3a Petroglyph

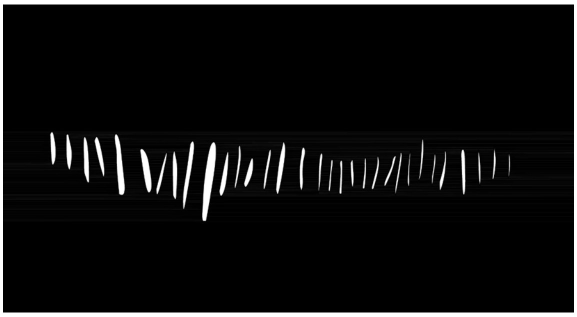


Fig. 4.44.3b Petroglyph

Dolmen

Some paintings are noticed in the dolmen. Human and animal figures are drawn in different postures. One animal figure depicted with a round head and multiple legs is seen. It might be a man sitting on an animal. To the left of this panel, a bird/ human figure is painted. Below this, an animal figure in a smaller size is drawn (Fig. 4.44.4a-4.44.4b).

Fig. 4.44.4a Human and animal figures

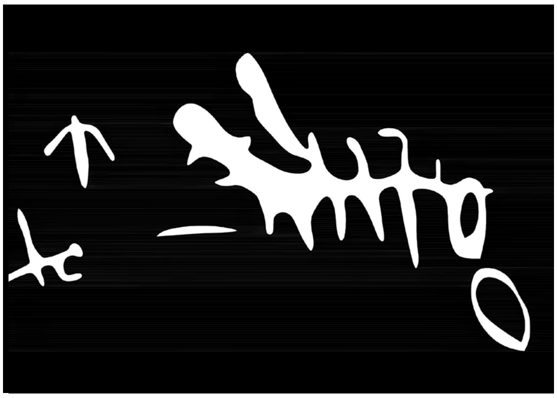
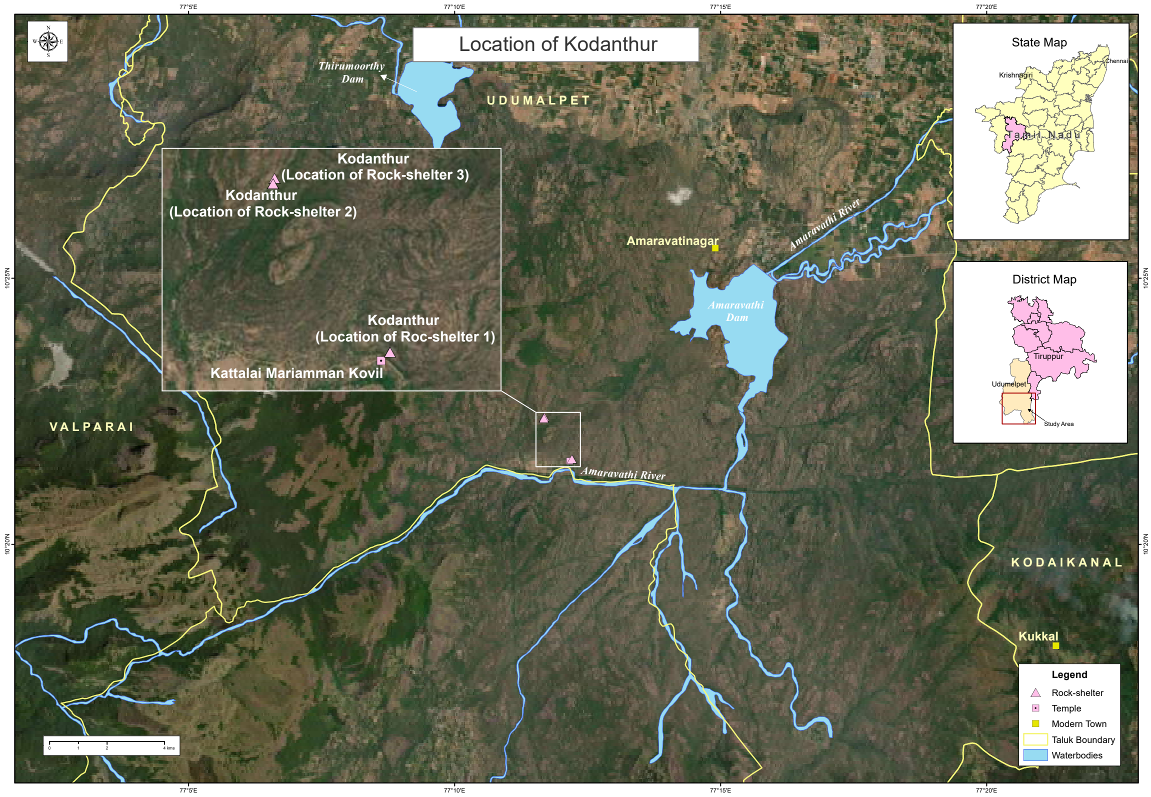


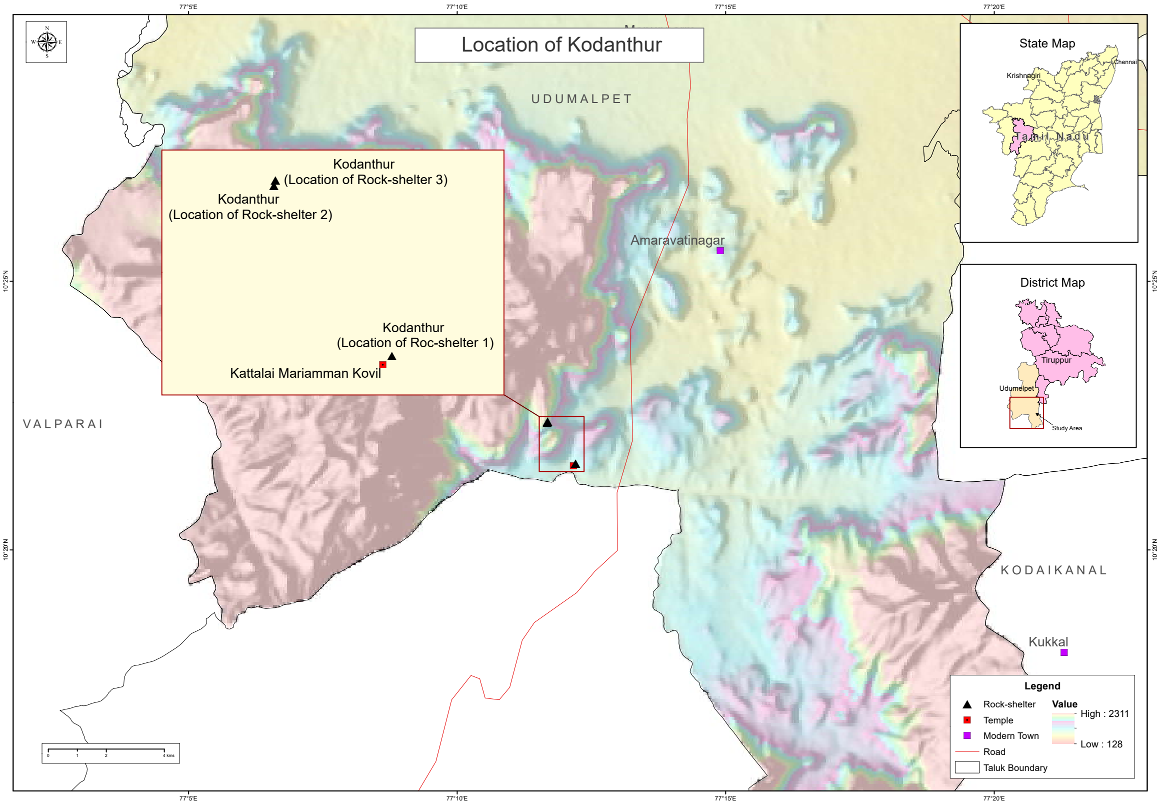
Fig. 4.44.4b Human and animal figures

4.45 Kodanthur

Kodanthur village (10.35942 N; 77.202758 E) lies at a distance of 7 km to the west of the check post of Tamil Nadu Forest Department, which is located at a distance of 28 km from Udumalaipettai on the Udumalaipettai-Munar road (Maps 4.45.1-4.45.2). The river Chinnaru is a tributary of the Amaravathi river. A temple called Kattalaiamman is located at the a distance of 4 km west of the check post. Opposite to the Kattalai Mariamman Kovil temple there are three localities. One is on the base level and the other two are slightly uphill. The dolmens here are generally found with encircled orthostats around them. In the base locality only one dolmen is having on its right orthostat paintings of animals executed in white. A little away from the previous three more dolmens are noticed, of which two were disturbed. In the uphill locality there are fourteen dolmens. Two of the dolmens present at the highest position are built on a flat surface and are encircled with stones and brick structure which is further


Location of Kodanthur
Thirumoorthy Dam
UDUMALPET
Kodanthur (Location of Rock-shelter 3)
Kodanthur (Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Amaravatinagar
Amaravathi River
Amaravathi Dam
Kodanthur (Location of Roc-shelter 1)
Kattalai Mariamman Kovil
VALPARAI
Amaravathi River
KODAIKANAL
Kukkal
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Tiruppur
Udumelpet
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Modern Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
77°5'E
77°10'E
77°15'E
77°20'E
10°25'N
10°20'N

Map 4.45.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Kodanthur
UDUMALPET
Kodanthur (Location of Rock-shelter 3)
Kodanthur (Location of Rock-shelter 2)
Amaravatinagar
Kodanthur (Location of Roc-shelter 1)
Kattalai Mariamman Kovil
VALPARAI
KODAIKANAL
Kukkal
State Map
Tamil Nadu
District Map
Tiruppur
Udumelpet
Study Area
Legend
Rock-shelter
Temple
Modern Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
Value
High : 2311
Low : 128
77°5'E
77°10'E
77°15'E
77°20'E
10°25'N
10°20'N

Map 4.45.2 Location of the rock shelter

encircled with rectangular orthostats. Also, these two dolmens are oriented in such a way that they overlook the other dolmens located downhill. It is also stated that more than one hundred dolmens are located in the area known as *pantha malai.*

Shelter- II (Ezuthalaipadi)

Ezuthalaipadi is located at a distance of 2 km from Kodanthur on the Kodanthur-Attumalai road and about 1km from a Soriyam Odai. There are two rock shelters namely Ezulthala Malai I and II. The first rock shelter is situated at 680 m AMSL. The extent of the site spans about 85 meters.

A trial trench is laid in the middle portion of the rock shelter on the available area to know the cultural stratigraphy of the site. The excavation yielded microlithic tools comprising points, blades and side scrapers made from chert and quartz. The cultural stratigraphy goes to a depth of 10m.

Shelter-III

The Shelter III is located about 400m downhill from Shelter I. The shelter's overall extent measures about 110m in length. One of the largest rock shelters noticed so far in Tamil Nadu. Paintings of red and white are found. Superimpositions of red figures over white are evident, suggesting that the suppressed white ochre paintings are older than the red ochre paintings. And both the shelters have suffered extreme vandalism in terms of modern graffiti and recent recreation of rock paintings.

Rock Shelter

The overall extent of the Shelter I measure about 248 m in length and 8 m in breadth. The overall canvas area measures about 9 m in length (Figs. 4.45.1-4.45.3).

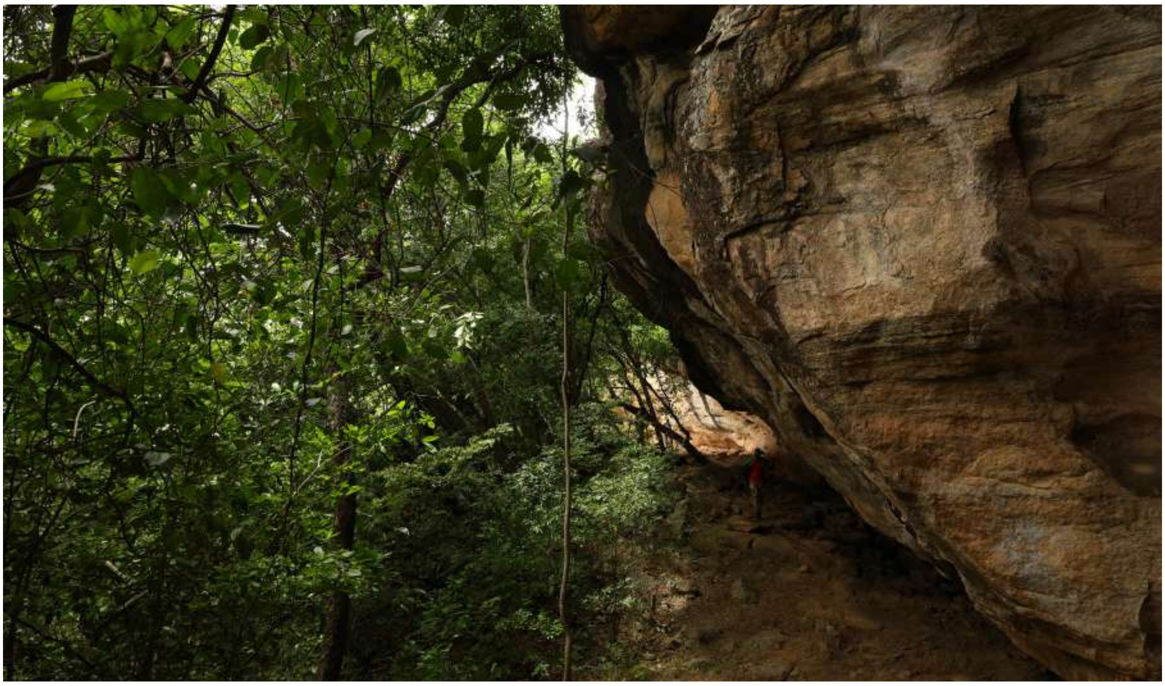


Fig. 4.45.1 General view of the rock shelter

Shelter II has a total length of 110 m and a breadth of 12 m. The canvas area measures about 80.5m in length.

The canvas area of the first dolmen is about 80cm and the overall size of the dolmen is about 9.30 m in length and 4.36m in height on an inclined surface. (Figs. 4.45.4-4.45.5).

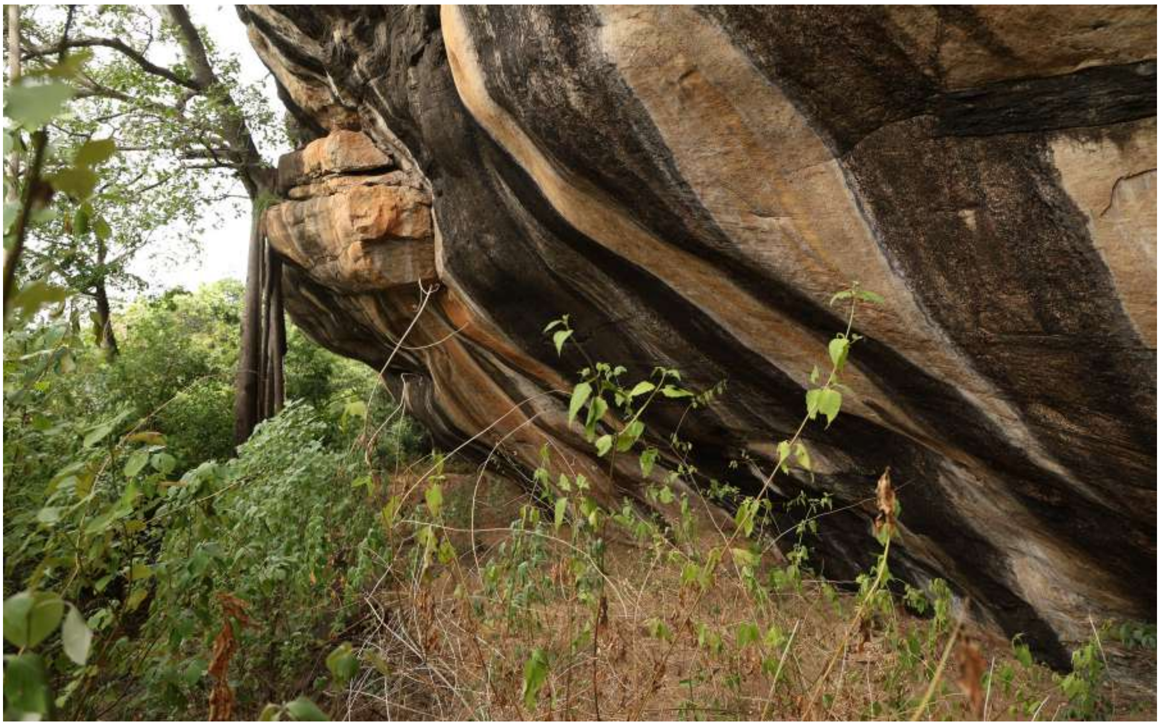


Fig. 4.45.2 General view of the rock shelter

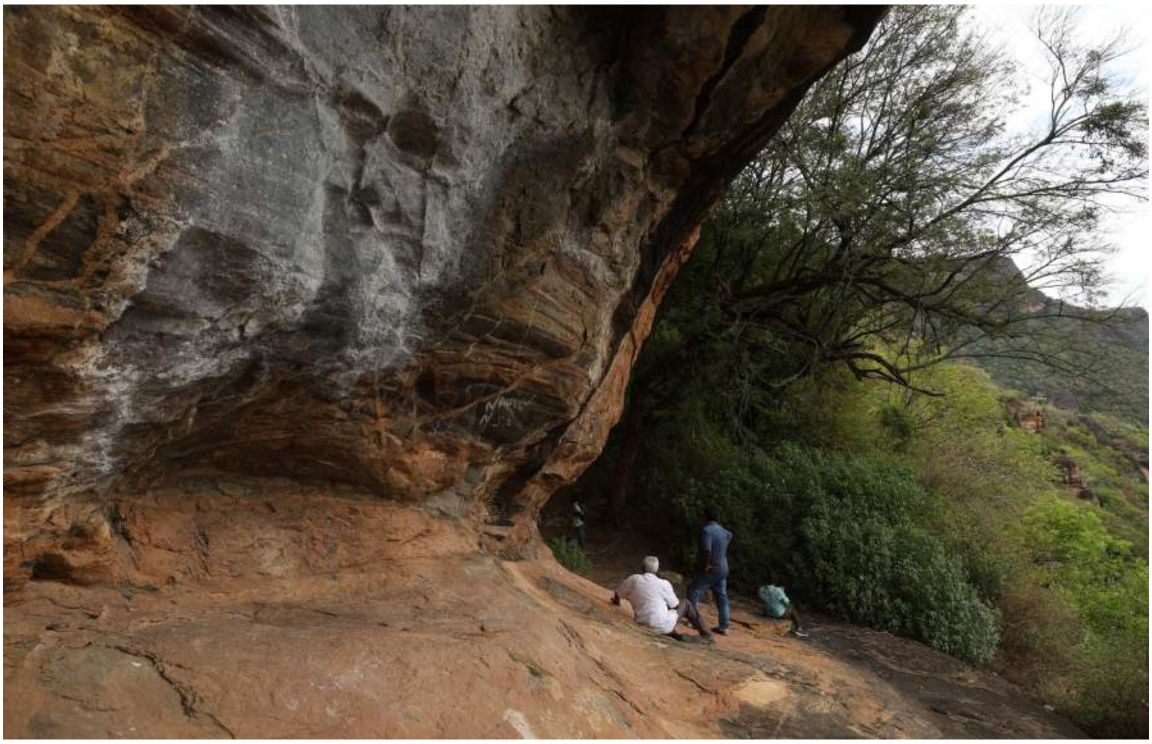


Fig. 4.45.3 General view of the rock shelter

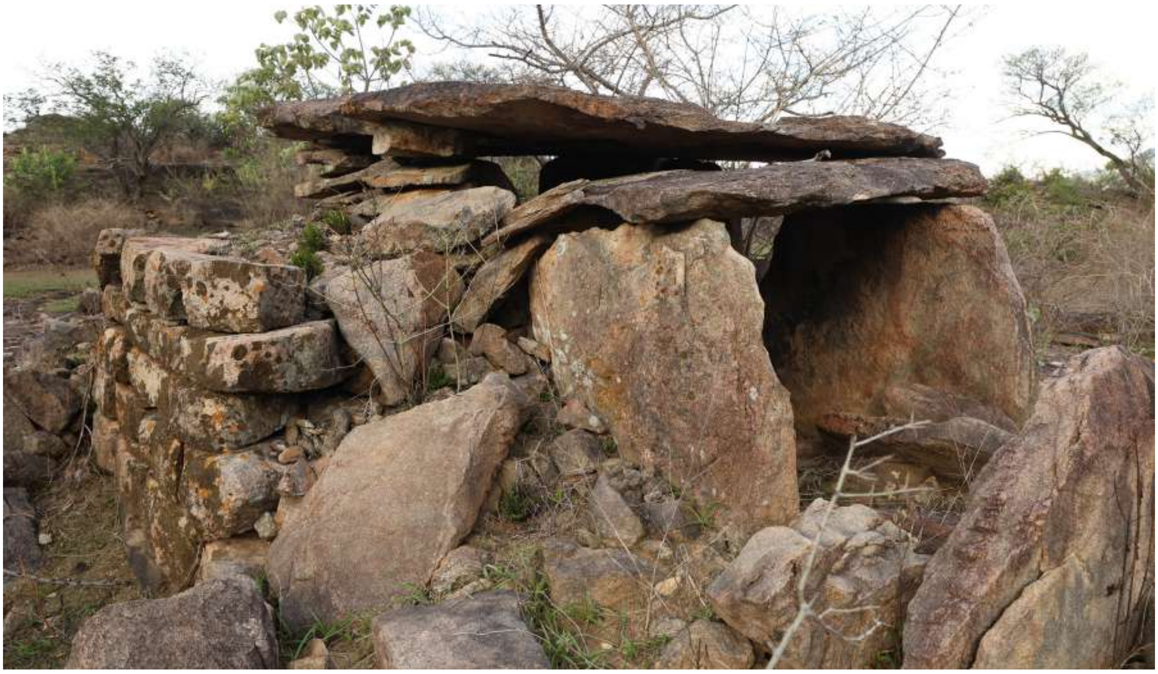


Fig. 4.45.4 General view of the dolmen

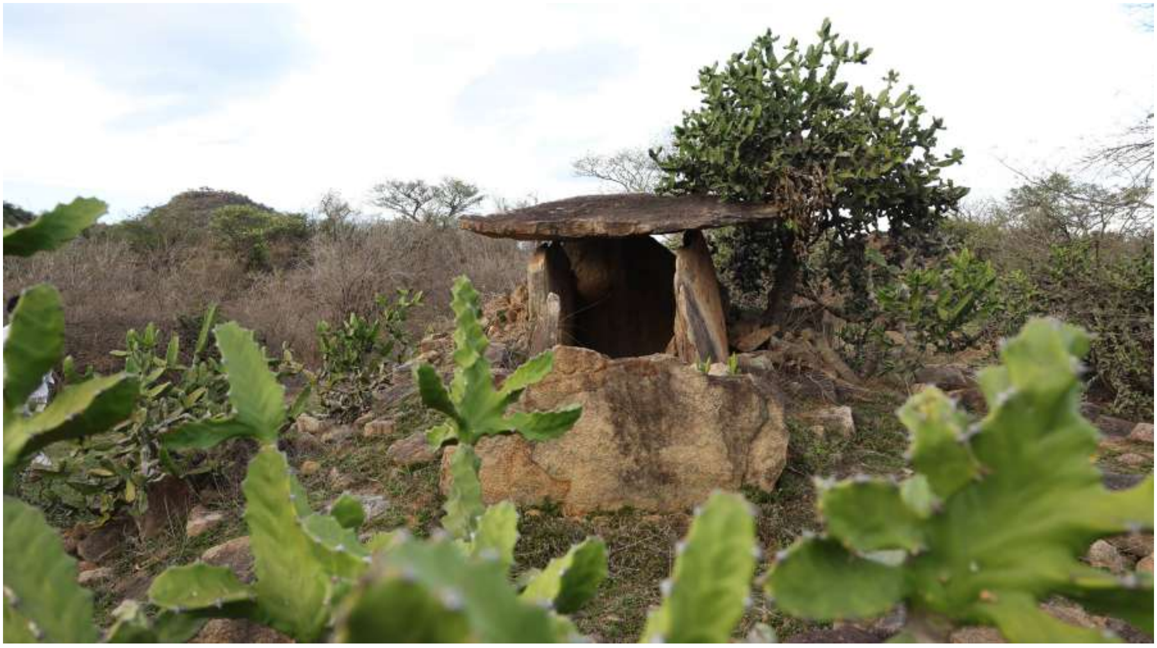


Fig. 4.45.5 General view of the dolmen

Description

The rock paintings are found both in the rock shelters and dolmens. These paintings are red and white. Speaking of the content of the paintings the dolmen holds a single animal figure, the rock shelter contains paintings of humans, animals, a number of hand prints and geometric and abstract symbols. The paintings are found in infilled, outline and line fashioned images made of simple linear lines, simple free form lines of varied thickness.

Panel Description

Firstly, there is a huge outline image of an animal made in red ochre within which several small sized pictographs are made. For instance, inside the body portion there are two red human figures of infilled fashion in which the left one has an infilled body with line fashioned long hands and legs and the head is shown joined to the body. The human figure on the right is executed in complete infilling style with a 'V' shaped body, short legs and hands. Beneath it there is a right facing animal figure made of white pigment in an infilled fashion. Shown with the features of short ears, pointed face, raised long tail and multiple slanting stripe lines over its body portion (Figs. 4.45.6a-4.45.6b).

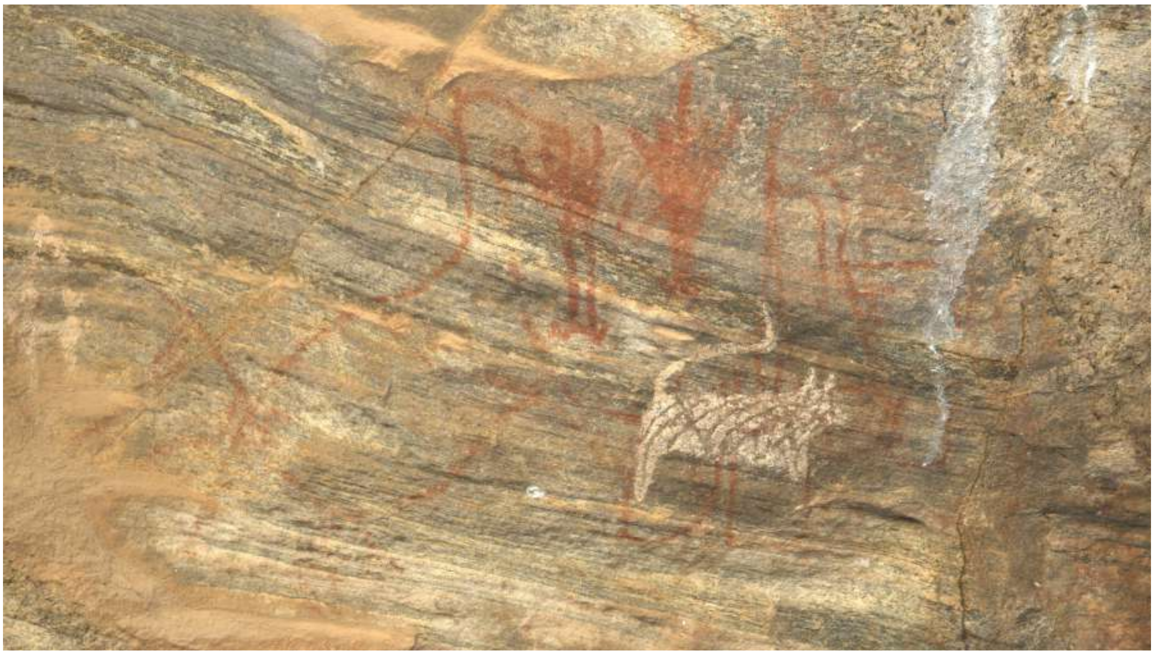


Fig. 4.45.6a Animals

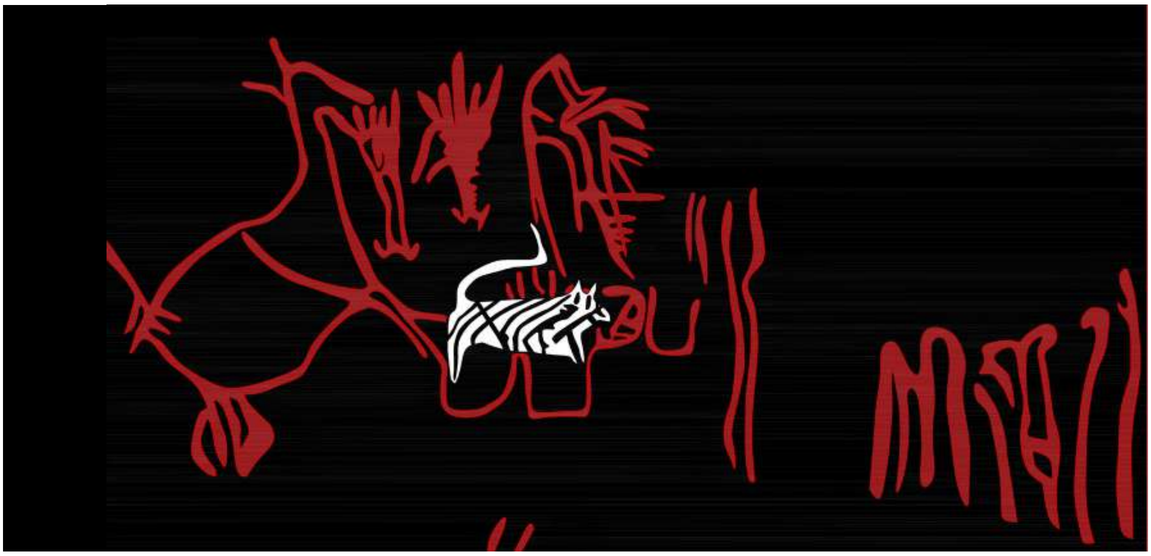


Fig. 4.45.6b Animals

All the paintings on this image are made of red ochre. Starting from the left there is a right facing animal painting made of an infilled style with four spike like extensions, a lowered head, simple line fashion legs. Further right of it, there are two ithyphallic human figures of which the left one is in infilled fashion and the right one is made of simple freeform line. Beneath it, several very small pictographs are evident of which some of them look like floral representations but are not fully distinguishable (Figs. 4.45.7a-4.45.7b).

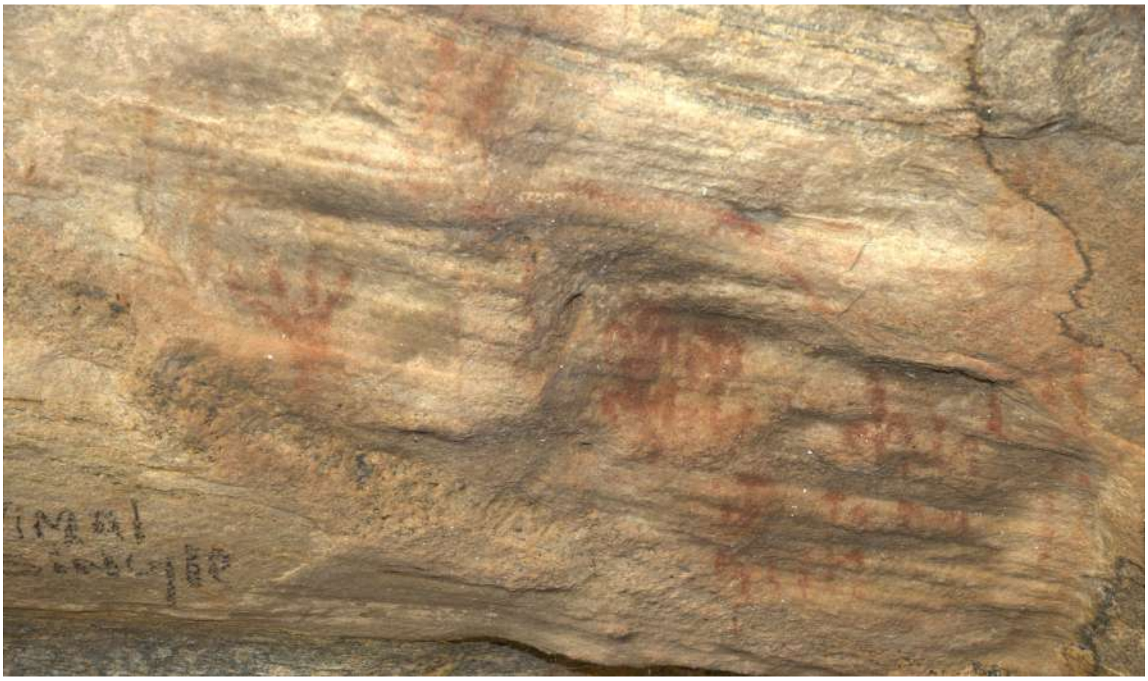


Fig. 4.45.7a Humans

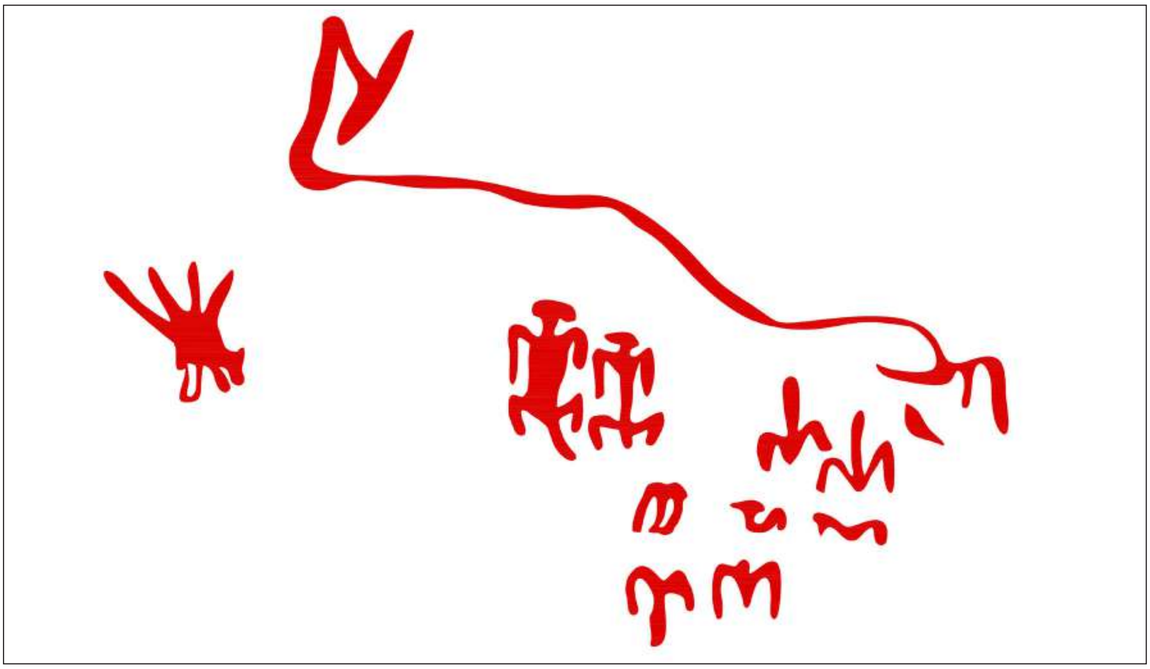


Fig. 4.45.7b Humans

Standing human figures made of white pigment with infilled body, hands and legs of simple lines, facing right shown holding a bow and arrow on the right are depicted. The human figure is shown standing upon a platform/ peak (Figs. 4.45.8a-4.45.8b).

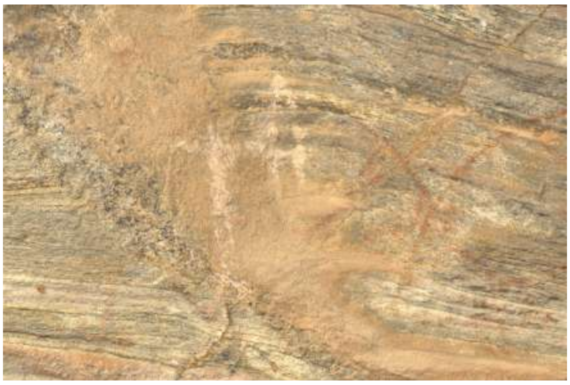


Fig. 4.45.8a Human with bow and arrow

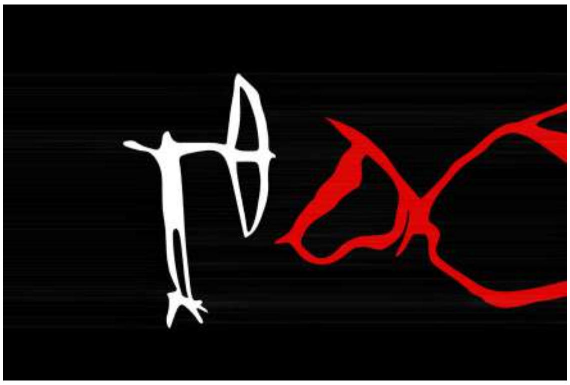


Fig. 4.45.8b Human with bow and arrow

The paintings in this image are in red. These paintings are faded in condition and not clearly distinguishable. Several consecutive simple vertical lines of free form in nature are made with varied strokes of thickness and lengths. Between them, there is an inverted 'V' symbol made in free form. Slightly above it on the right there is an elliptical figure made with two small extensions on the top left portion, it could be an animal figure. Further to the right of these images there are a few simple horizontal lines of unequal length (Figs. 4.45.9a-4.45.9b).

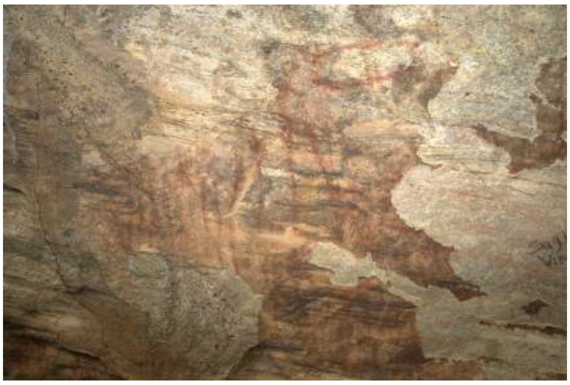


Fig. 4.45.9a Multiple strokes

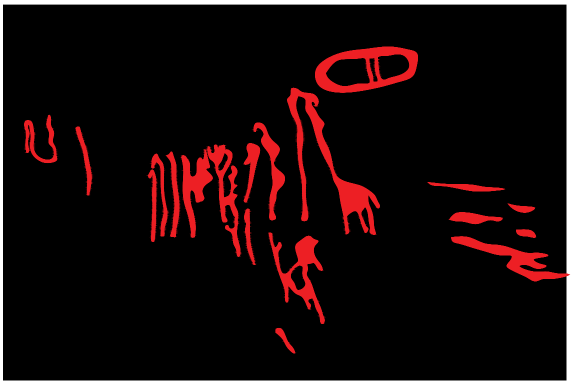


Fig. 4.45.9b Multiple strokes

This image consists of red and white paintings. On the left, there is a human figure with extended hands, straight legs and a horizontal line drawn on the waist level indicating a weapon is evident. On it, there is an infilled image of a bird shown in the top angle with extended wings. Further right of it, there is an infilled carved fashion bird figure facing left, drawn in lateral perspective with a long neck, and legs with a short body, probably depicting a crane. Beneath it, there is a simple stick fashioned animal figure in white pigment (Figs. 4.45.10a-4.45.10b).

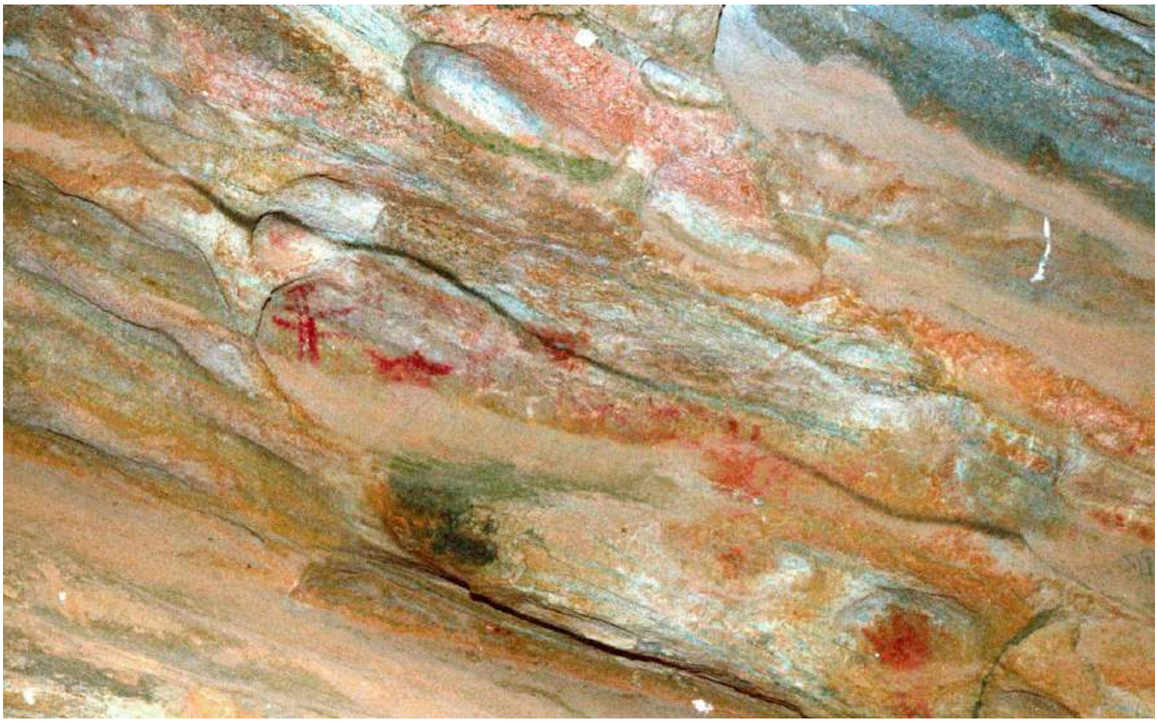


Fig. 4.45.10a Human and animal

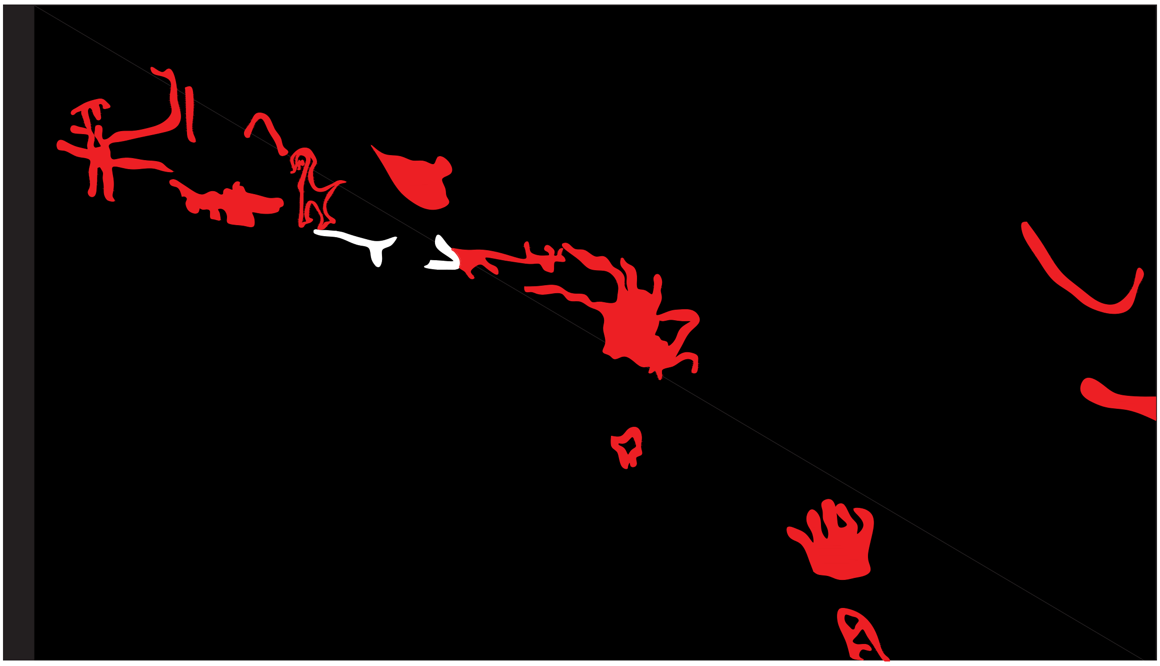


Fig. 4.45.10b Human and animal

Paintings of red and white pigment are present in this panel. The white ochre painting is in a simple stick fashion animal figure as noticed in the earlier image. Above it there is an infilled red ochre painting of a bird in a lateral perspective. Beneath it, there are depictions of two infilled animal figures, of which the right one is longer in length than the left one. The paintings are made in white and red colours and hand prints are seen in red. And an animal figure drawn in white pigment. (Figs. 4.45.11a-4.4511b).

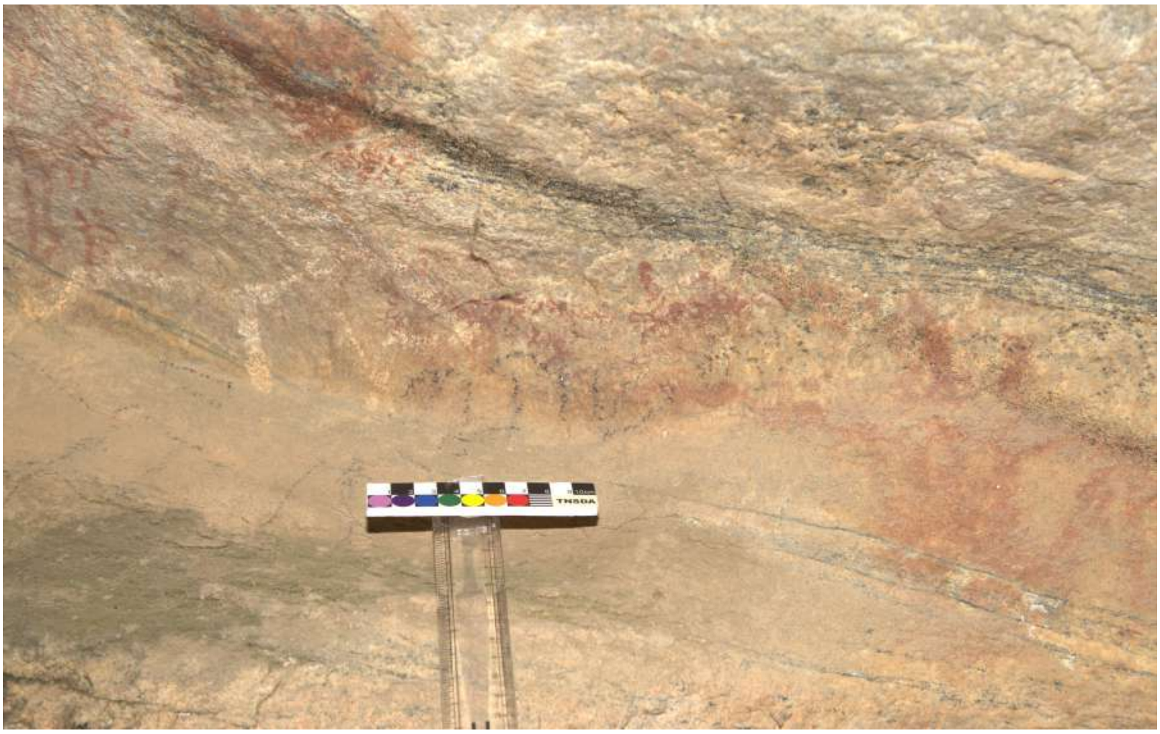


Fig. 4.45.11a Animals

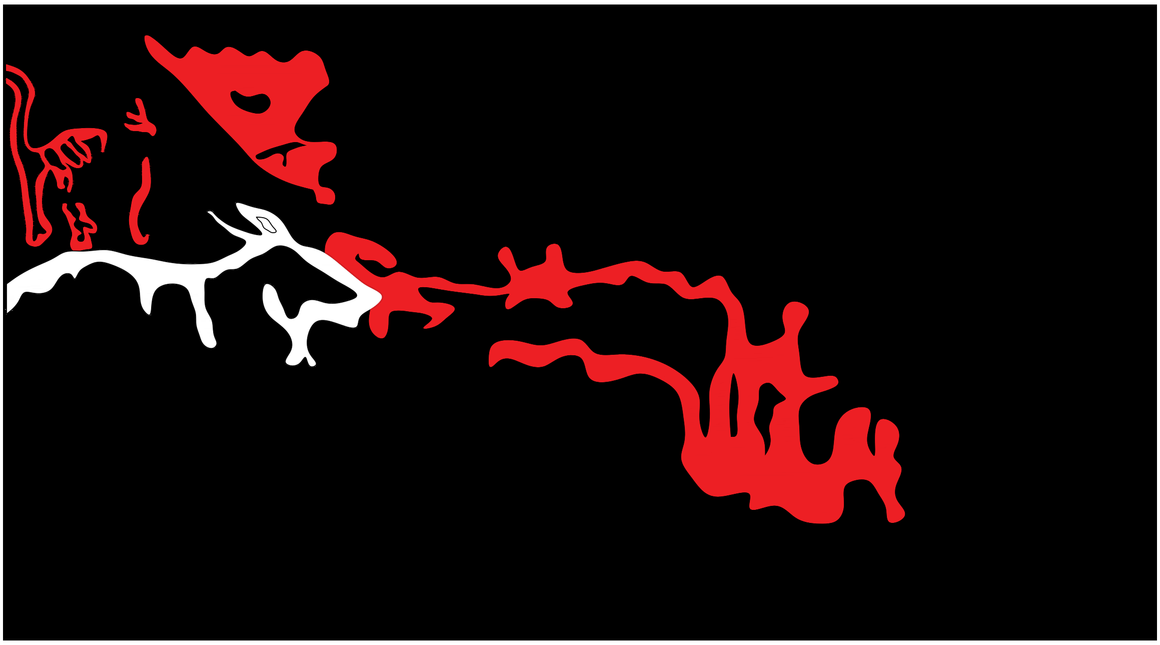


Fig. 4.45.11b Animals

Shelter II

Left hand palm impression made with red ochre. The ring finger of the hand is depicted very short, probably amputated or kept folded (Figs. 4.45.12a-4.45.12b).

The red figure with thin decorated lines may be an abstract of a animal figure. The top and bottom images are made in a slightly projected fashioned. There are several spikes extending from the top outline portion of the painting. In the top paintings, consecutive semi-circles are made in three sets and from the top outer lines. Bottom one is in the form of a double line hook at the left and infilled spikes on the right with a line extending downwards (Figs. 4.45.13a-4.45.13b).

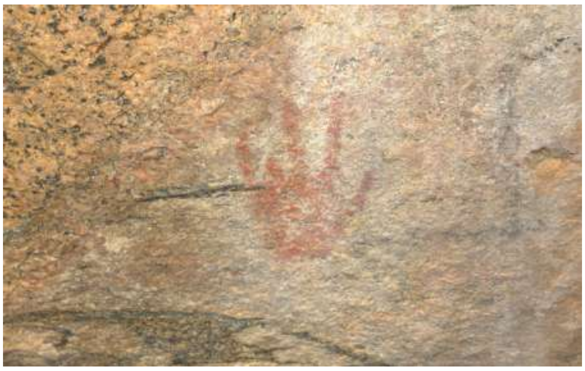


Fig. 4.45.12a Hand Impression

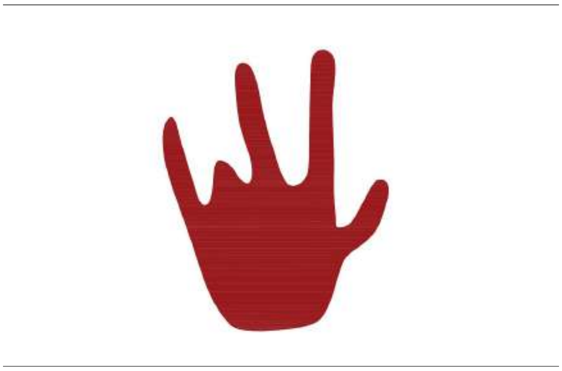


Fig. 4.45.12b Hand Impression

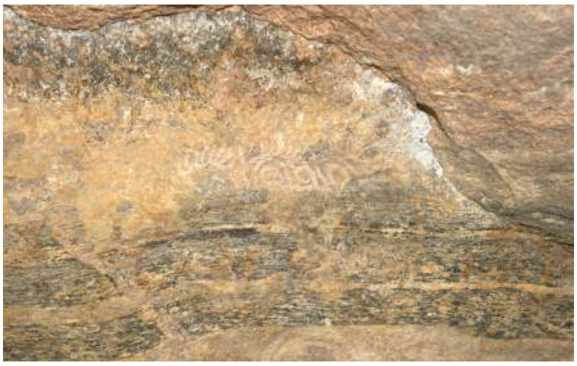


Fig. 4.45.13a Red ochre abstract/ animal paintings

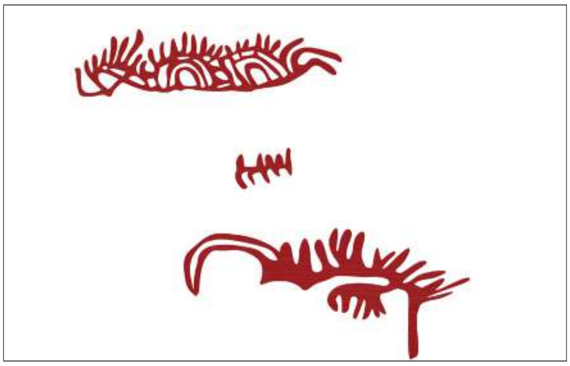


Fig. 4.45.13b Red ochre abstract/ animal paintings

Ithyphallic human figure made of thick stroke in white colour, hands and legs are extended in a horizontal straight line intersected by two vertical lines probably denoting the interlocking of the human. (Figs. 4.45.14a-4.45.14b).

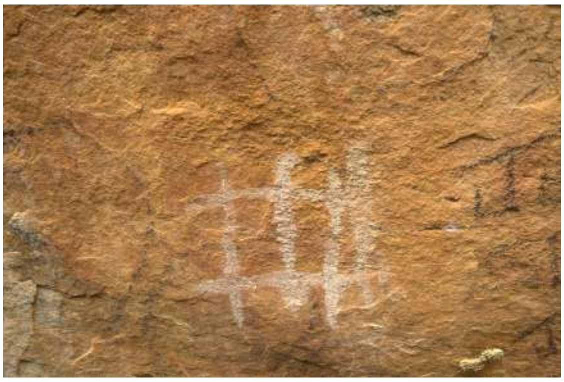


Fig. 4.45.14a Tied ithyphallic human

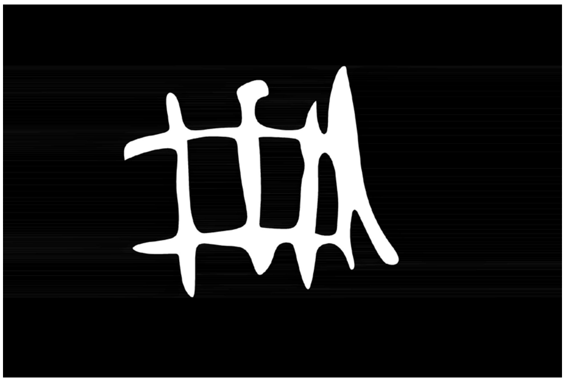


Fig. 4.45.14b Tied ithyphallic human

The thin outline given to an animal might be a deer there is no filling, but with a long-infilled tail (Figs. 4.45.15a-4.45.15b).

Fig. 4.45.15a Deer

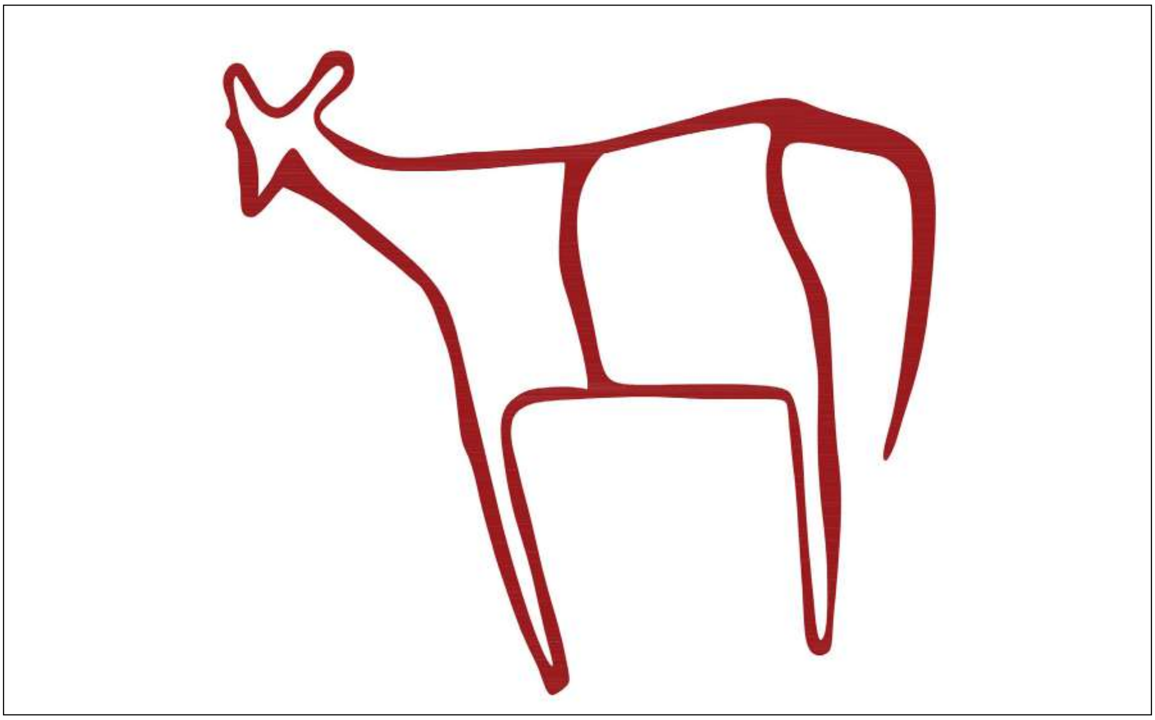


Fig. 4.45.15b Deer

In this rock shelter, a human figure is drawn in red. A man raised his right hand and is holding something and his left hand is behind his body and he has raised his right leg and the whole body is balanced on the left leg. Above the human figure, there are two horizontal lines given with red ochre. (Figs. 4.45.16a-4.4516b).

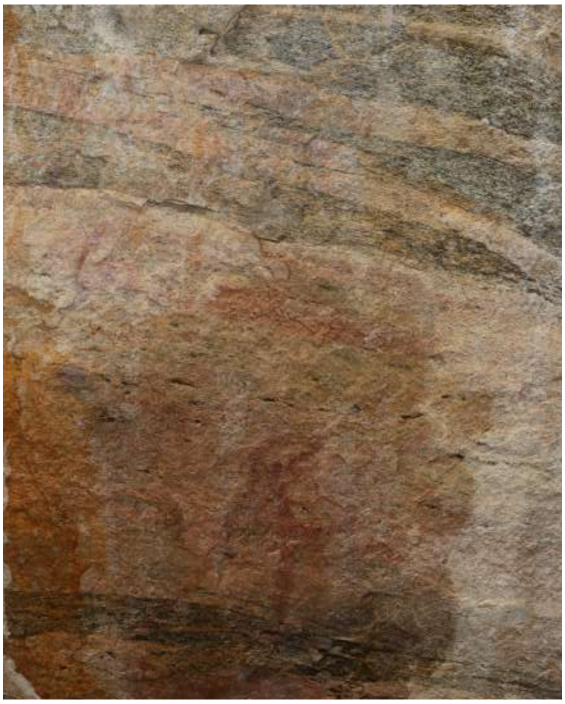


Fig. 4.45.16a Human

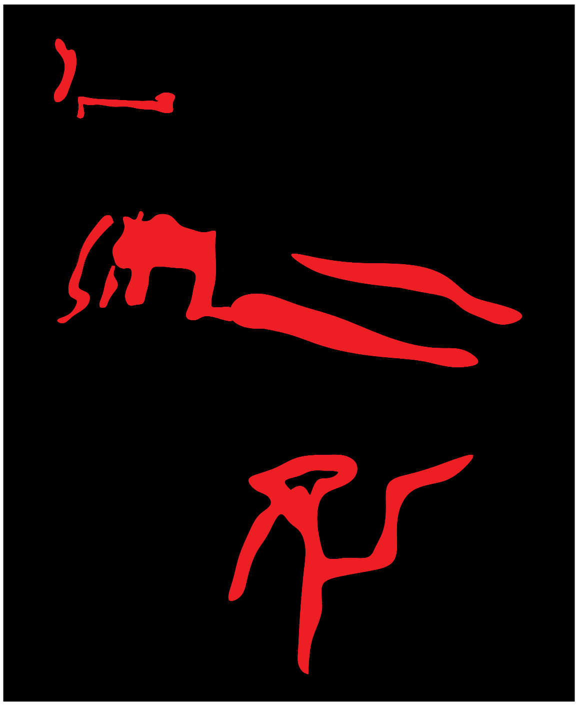


Fig. 4.45.16b Human

In this painting, an animal figure is drawn in red. Cattle like figure is noticed, others are faded and unidentifiable (Figs. 4.45.17a-4.4517b).

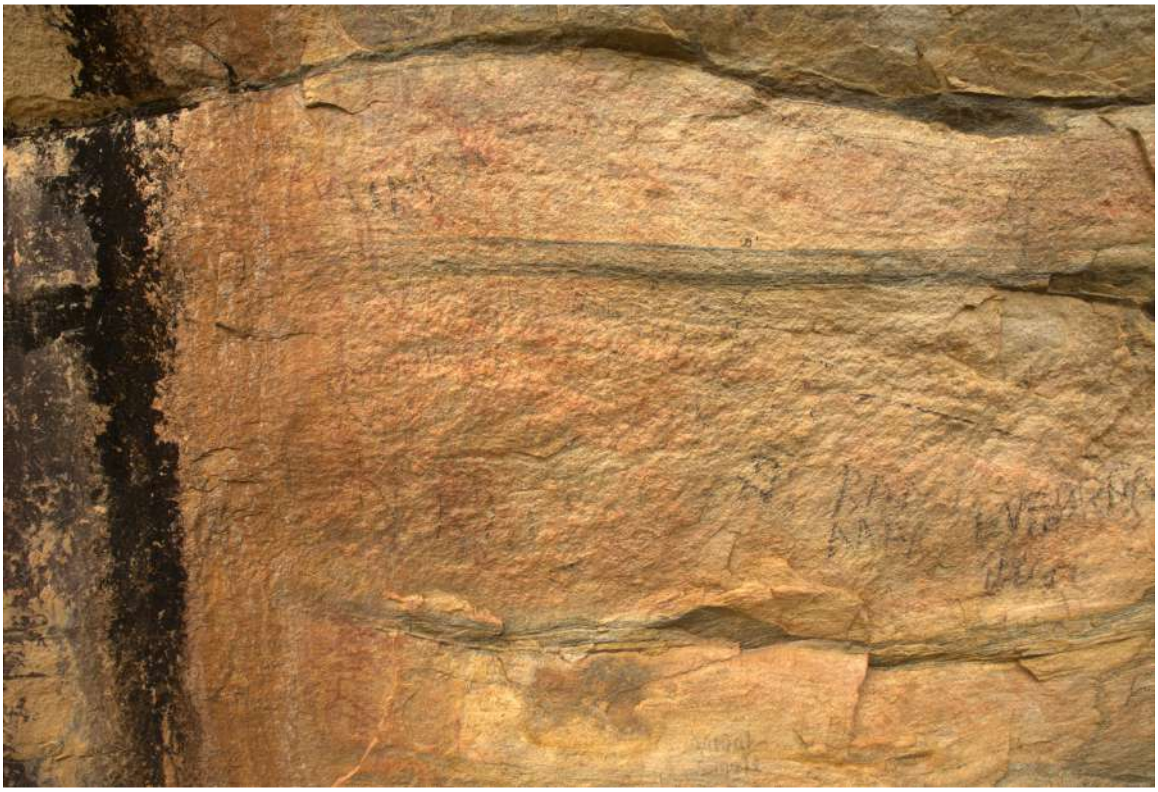


Fig. 4.45.17a Animal

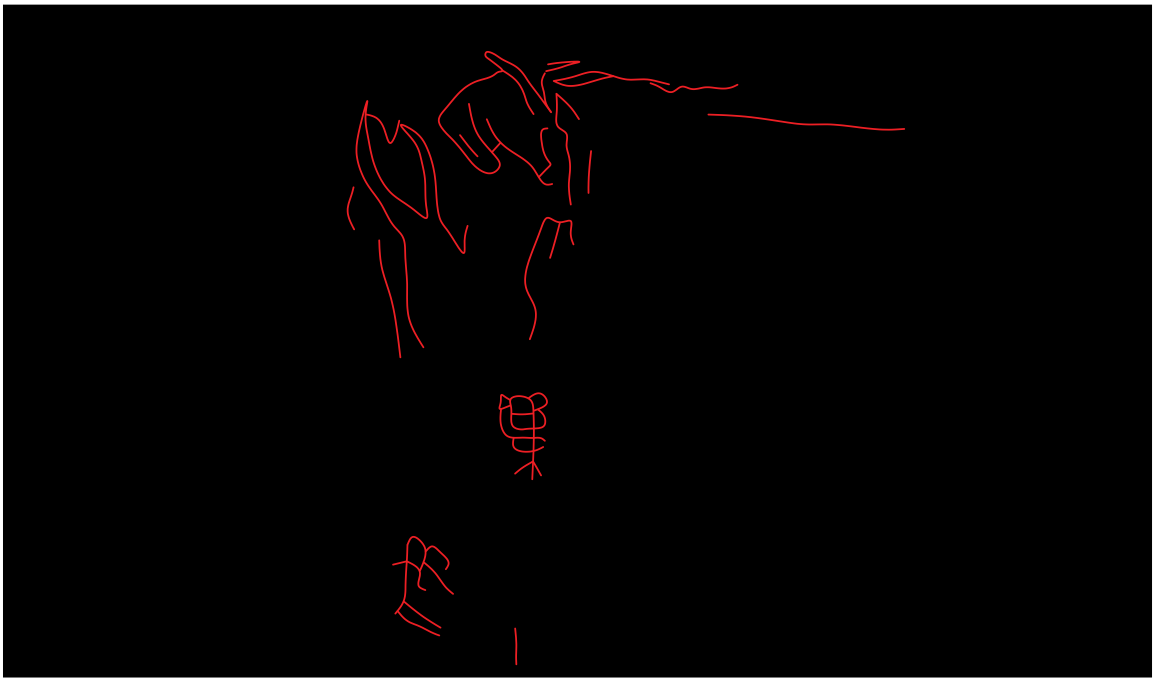


Fig. 4.45.17b Animal

Shelter III

Two human figures in a squatted position are made of red ochre, the left one is comparatively smaller than the right one, the hands are in a wavy pattern and in the squatted position the right leg is shown further extended. The figure on the right is linear with the left hand pointing downwards and the right hand shown with small extension, long body and squatted position with lengthy legs that have been noticed compared with other figurines. (Figs. 4.45.18a-4.4518b).

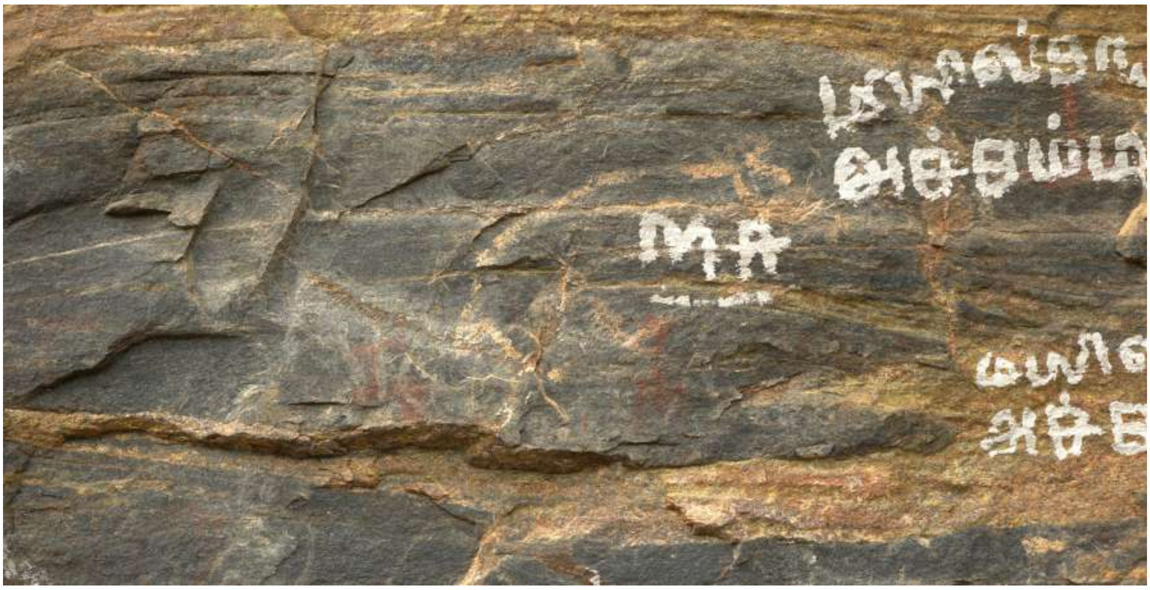


Fig. 4.45.18a Humans

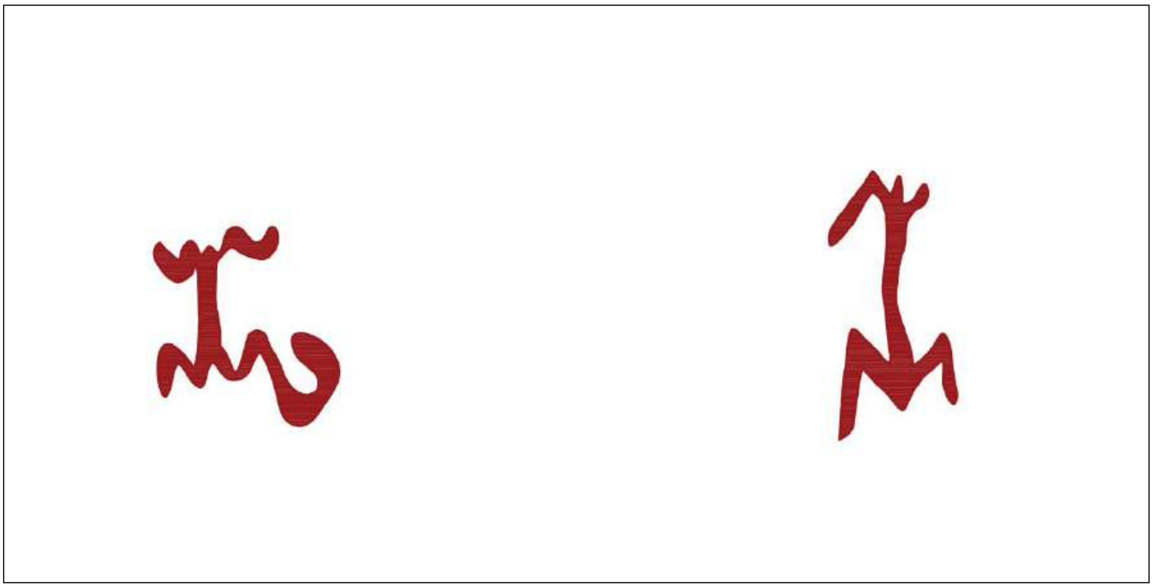


Fig. 4.45.18b Humans

The paintings are made of white pigment and there are eight human figurines with infilled limbs. Seven of them look like ithyphallic. Surrounding these, there are seven simple floral representations with a single vertical line of varying length among five of them, the other two floral representations are depicted with single vertical lines also drawn. (Figs. 4.45.19a-4.4519b).

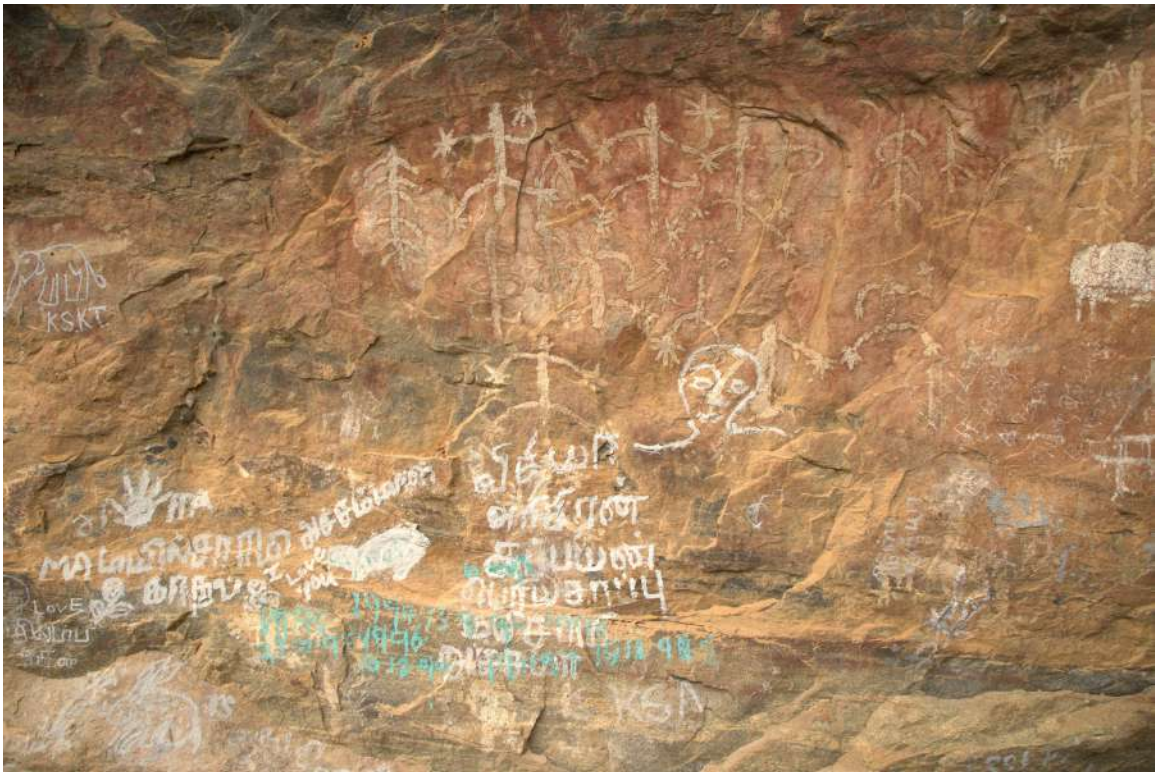


Fig. 4.45.19a Composite ithiphalic human

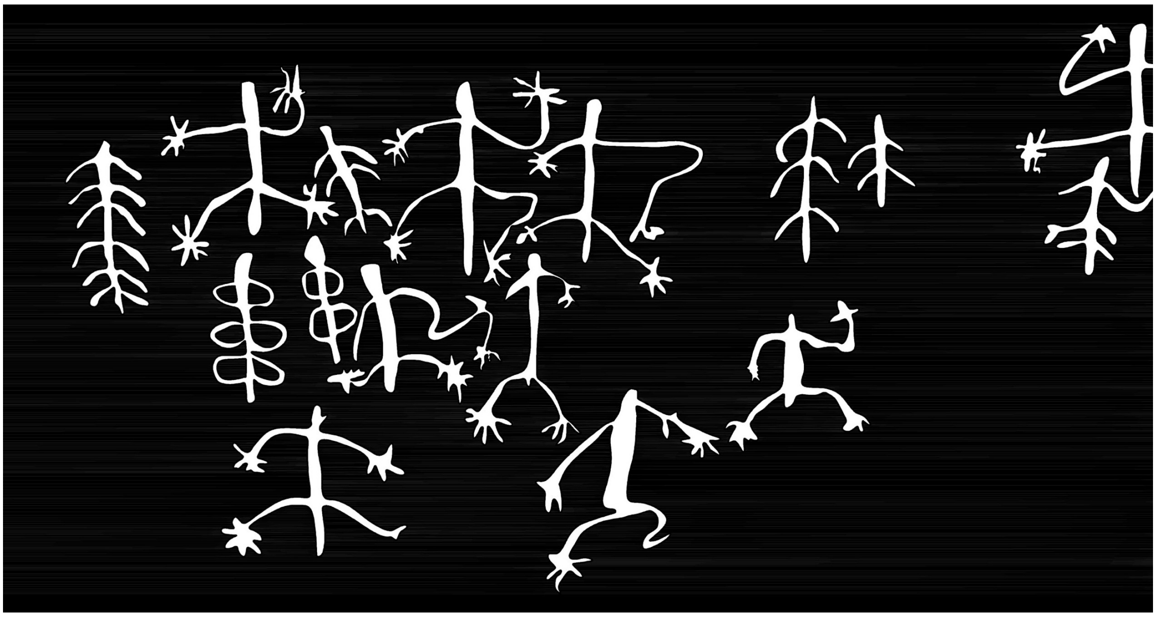


Fig. 4.45.19b *Composite ithiphalic human*

The paintings are made of white pigments. Two human figurines with infilled and linear pattern hands and legs are seen. Below this, there is a depiction of an infilled animal figure with a long body, short legs, short horns and phallus, probably a depiction of a boar. To the right of it there are two human figures with infilled bodies, linear pattern short legs and hands raised above for the right one and extended for the left one. To its right it, there is a human figure depicted in horizontal orentation, may be a dead person's head. There are clusters of infilled animals, human figures ithyphallic in nature. (Figs. 4.45.20a-4.45.20b).

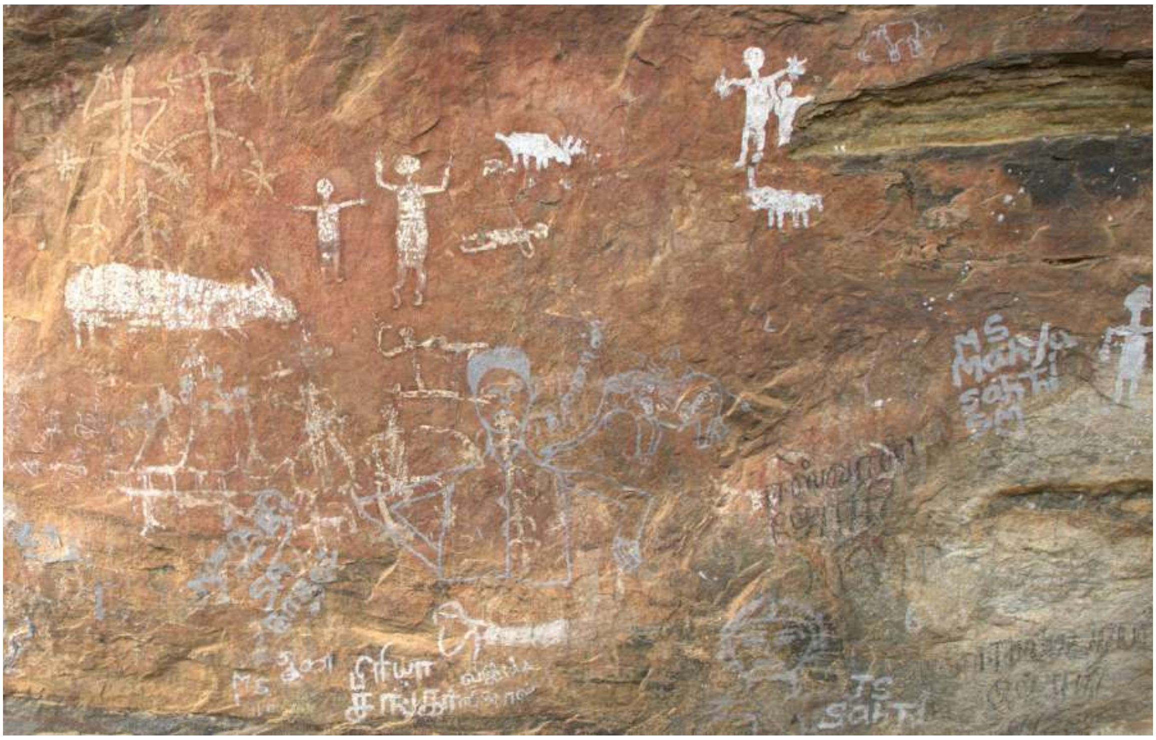


Fig. 4.45.20a *Humans, animals and human with bow and arrow*

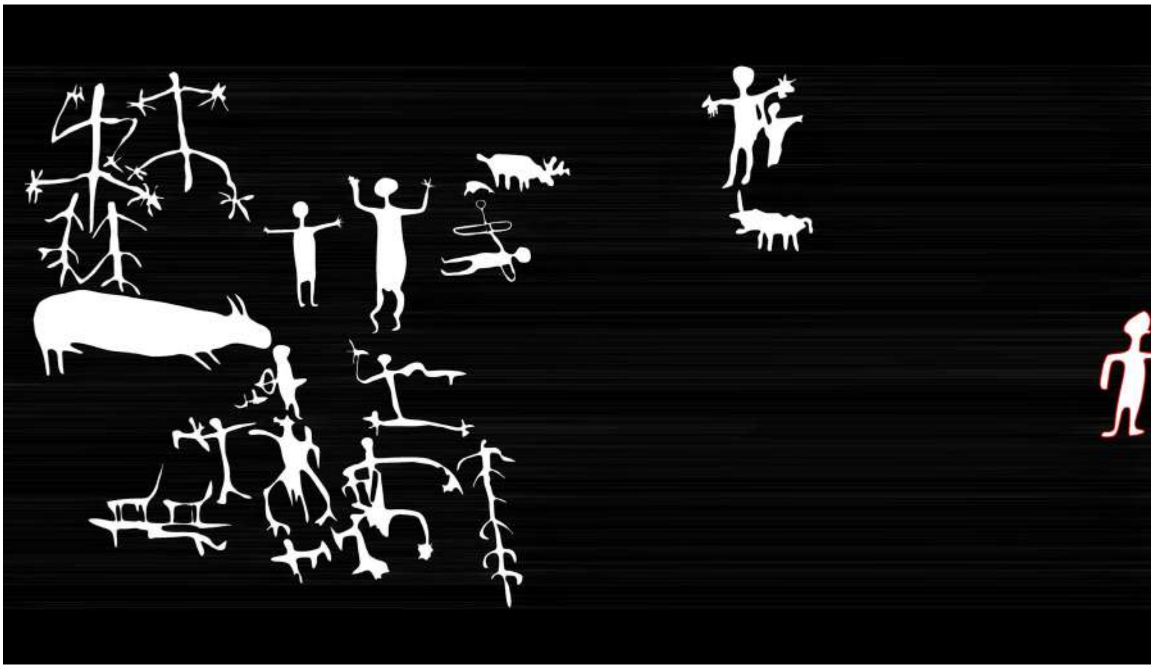


Fig. 4.45.20b Humans, animals and human with bow and arrow

There are groups of human figures drawn in this panel, on the left part, two human figures of adult and children with extended hands and animal figures are drawn. To their right three human figures are drawn, in this scene two human figures are standing inside the frame. One more person is standing next to them. (Figs. 4.45.21a-4.45.21b).

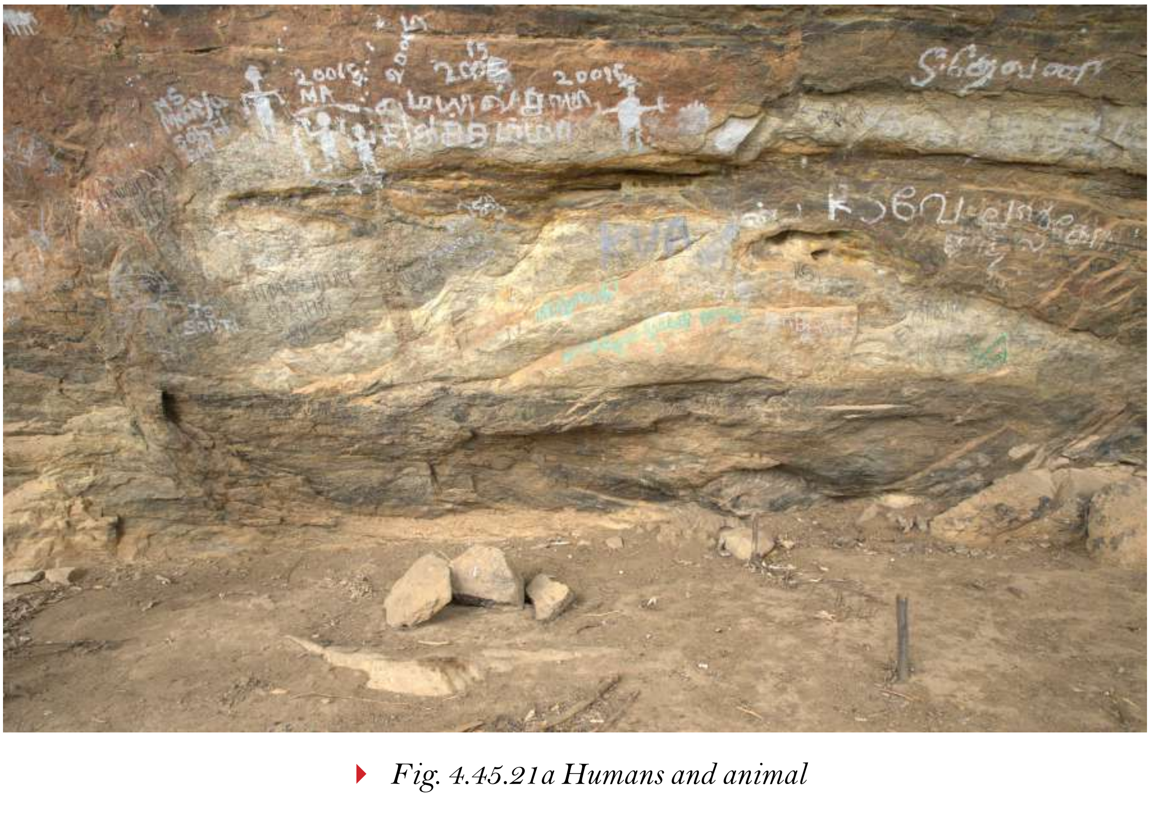


Fig. 4.45.21a Humans and animal

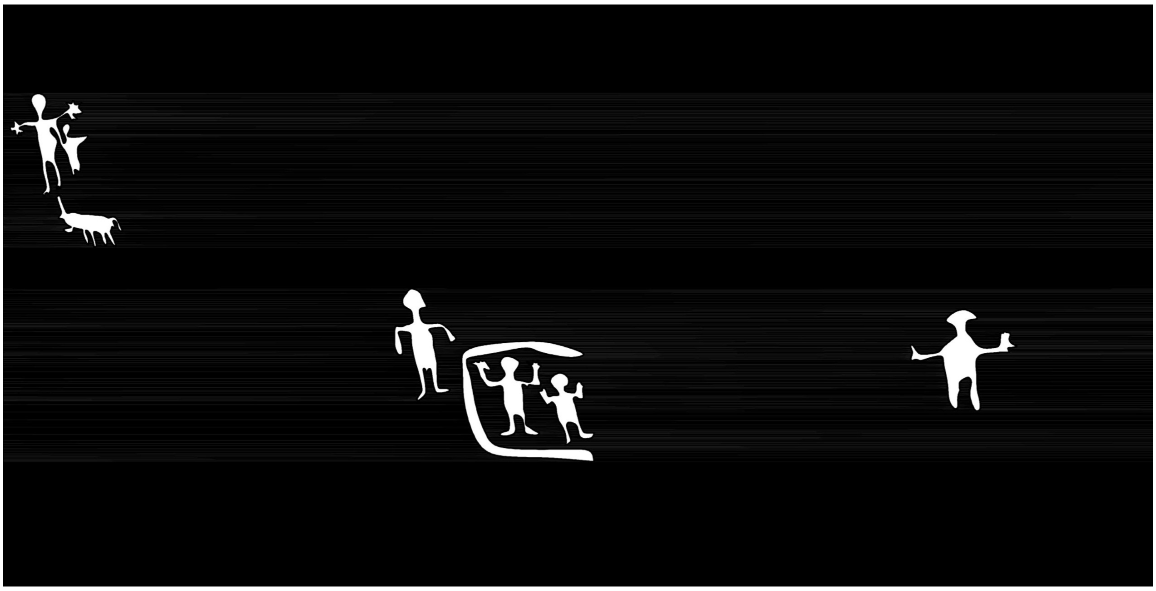


Fig. 4.45.21b *Humans and animal*

The next group of human figurines are standing in order with two more rows, one below the other. The top row consists of five human figures and the bottom row consists of seven and on the left of the top row and top of the bottom row there is a huge human figure, ithyphallic in nature. All of them are depicted in a single frame and are white in colour. (Figs. 4.45.22a-4.45.22b).

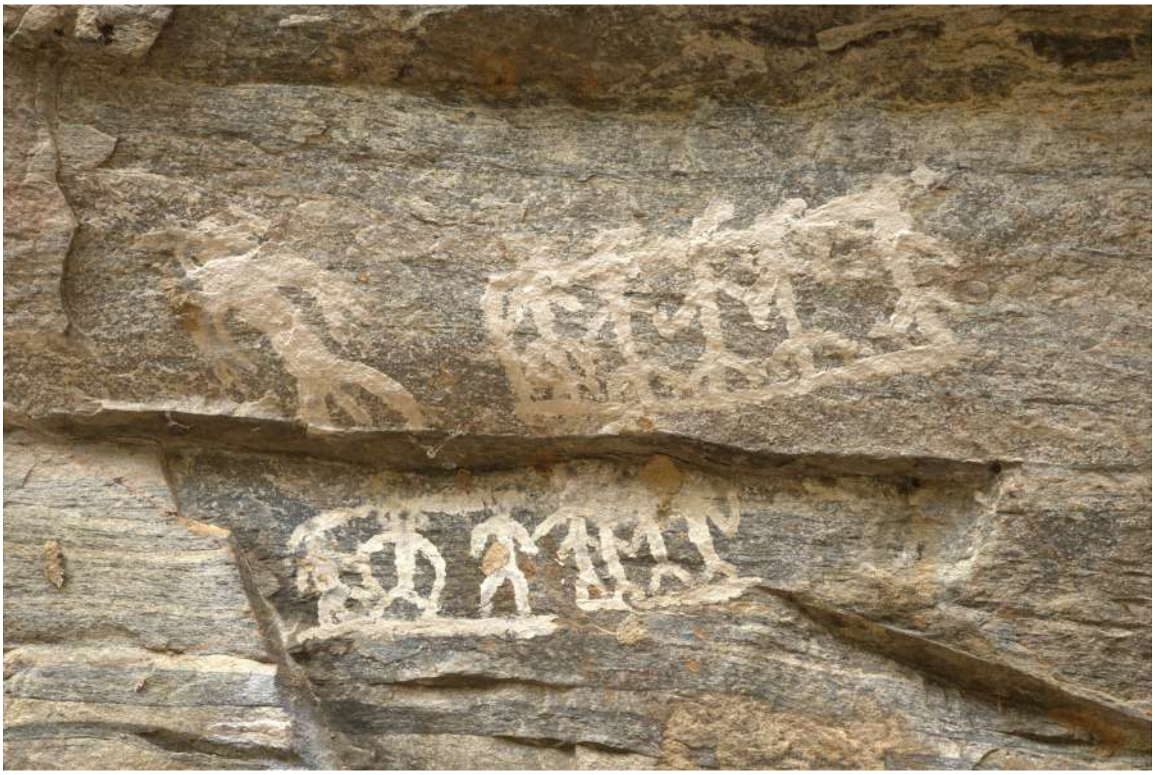


Fig. 4.45.22a *Humans*

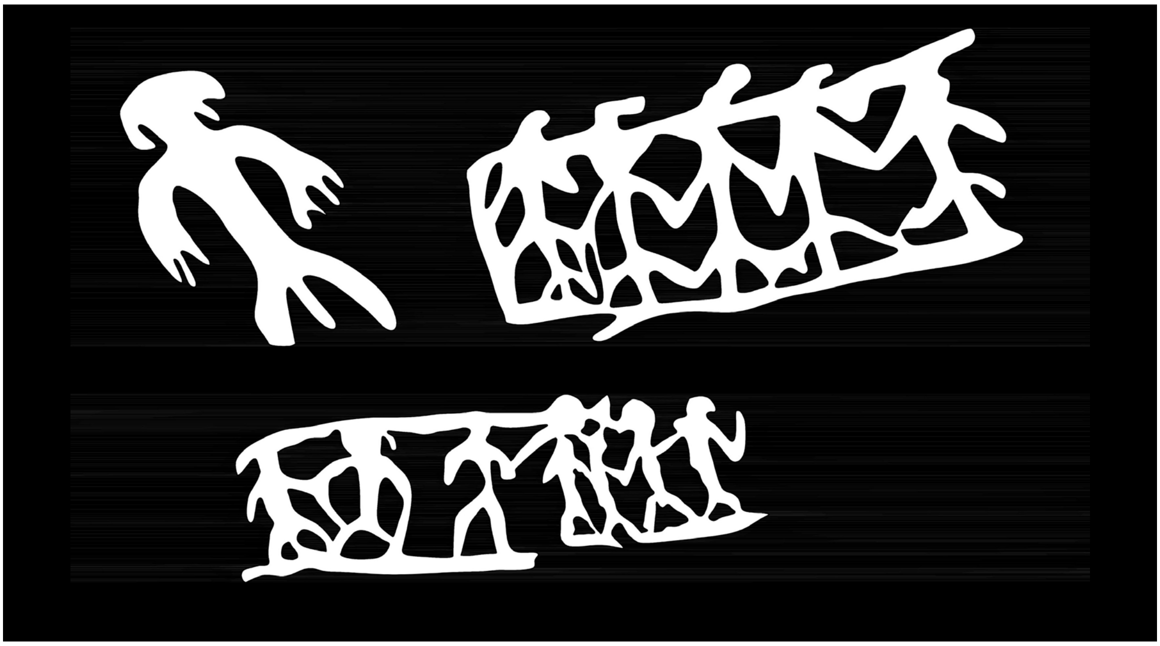


Fig. 4.45.22b Humans

The next painting shows three human figures drawn in white pigment. It seems they are dancing or celebrating. Three of them are drawn in a linear pattern with wide open hands and legs with featureless heads. (Figs. 4.45.23a-4.45.23b).

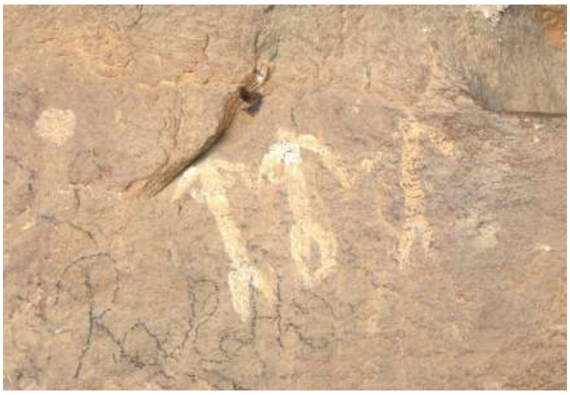


Fig. 4.45.23a Humans

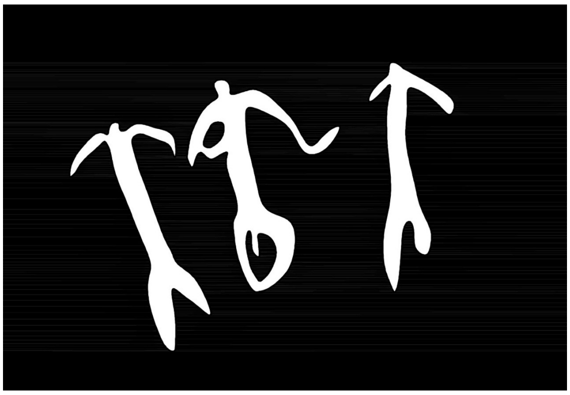


Fig. 4.45.23b Humans

The next panel is having red ochre infilled animal figure of a deer on the left and on the right it might be a goat. Teats or phallus of both are evidently depicted, the tail of the right animal is shown swrilled like a dog. (Figs. 4.45.24a-4.45.24b).

Two animal figures are made with red ochre, one on the right portion is shown with an extension below indicating a phallus and the left portion is shown with two short lines extending from its bottom indicating teats that is female. The male animal has an edged face with a reflective and lengthy horn with a muscular body and the legs show with thick lines and the other one is with a short horn. (Figs. 4.45.25a-4.45.25b).

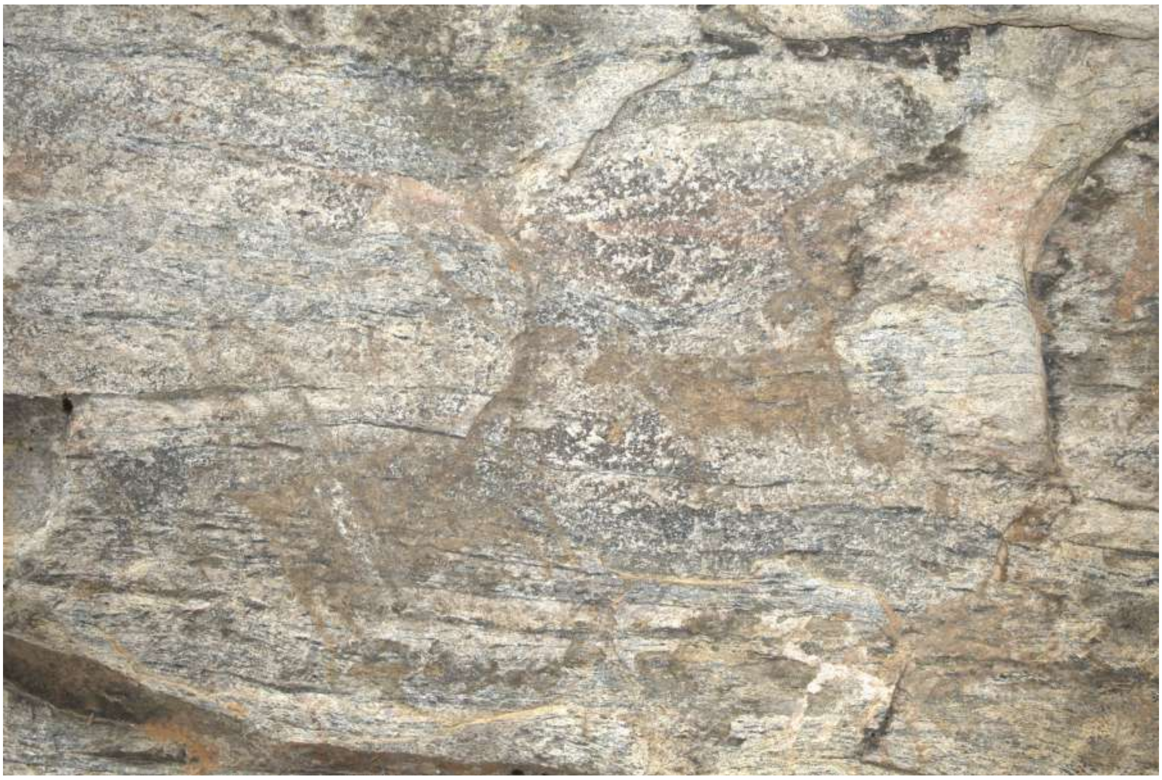


Fig. 4.45.24a Animals

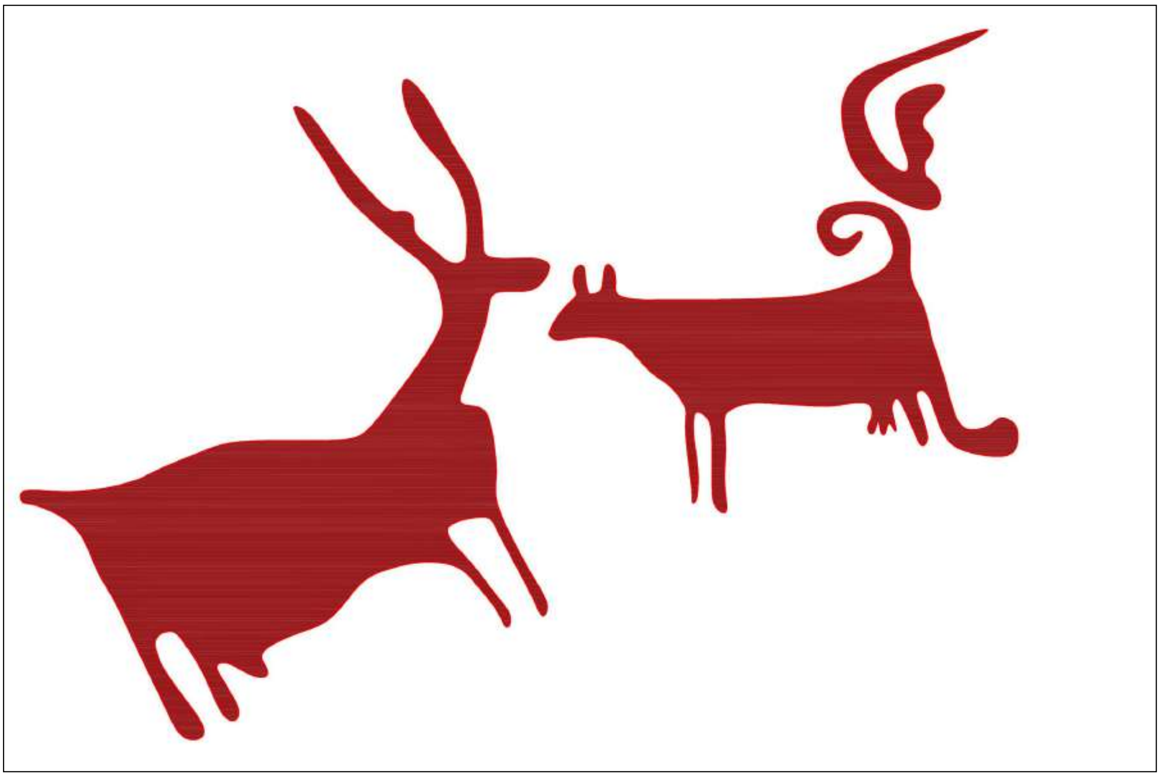


Fig. 4.45.24b Animals

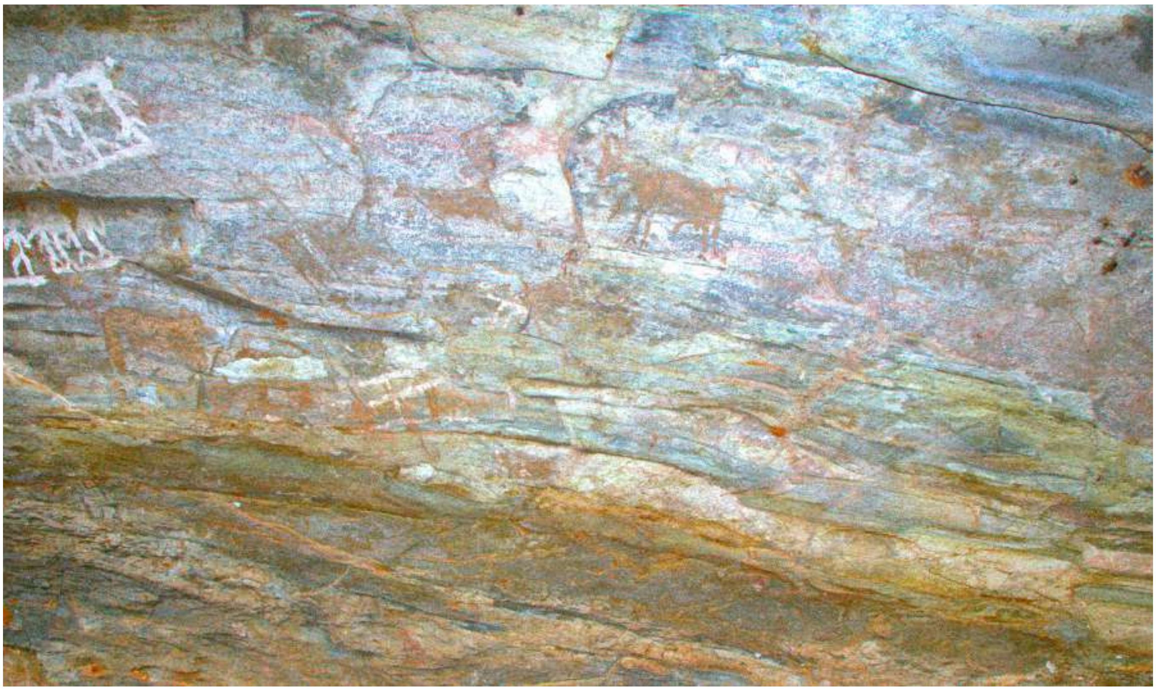


Fig. 4.45.25a Animals

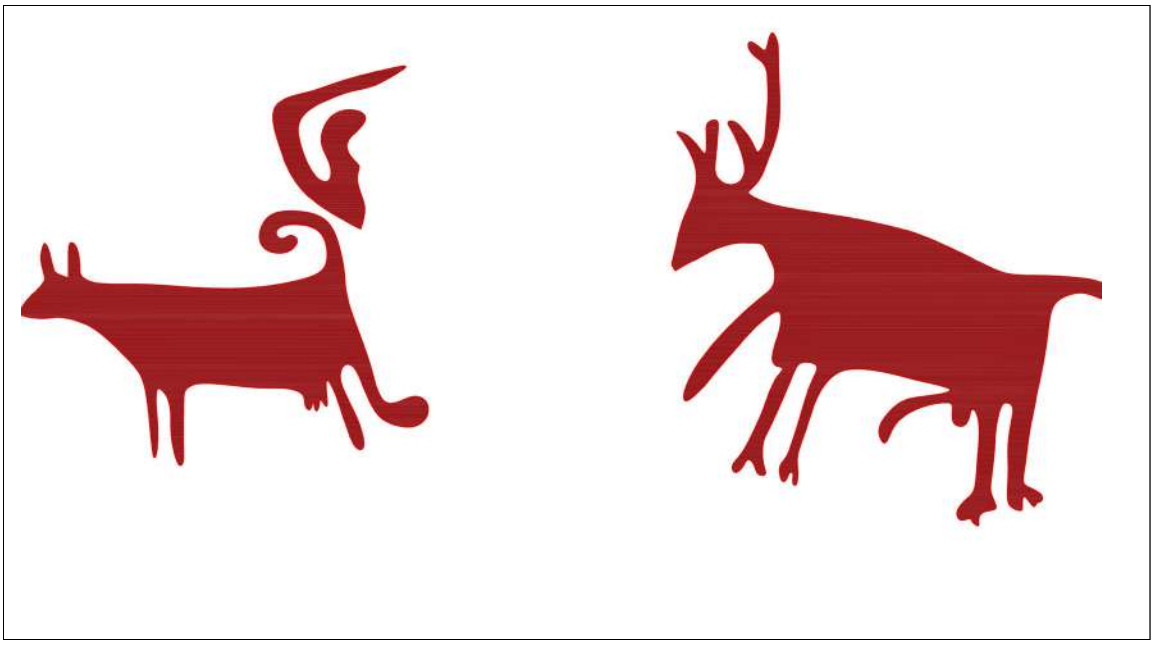


Fig. 4.45.25b Animals

This shelter shows that there are four human figures painted in white pigment, the left one might be a monster. It is painted with a round head outline with a short neck of thick line continued, the hands are projected and curved. Another human figure is shown in a smaller size with upward hands, a kind of screaming and running manner. (Figs. 4.45.26a-4.45.26b).

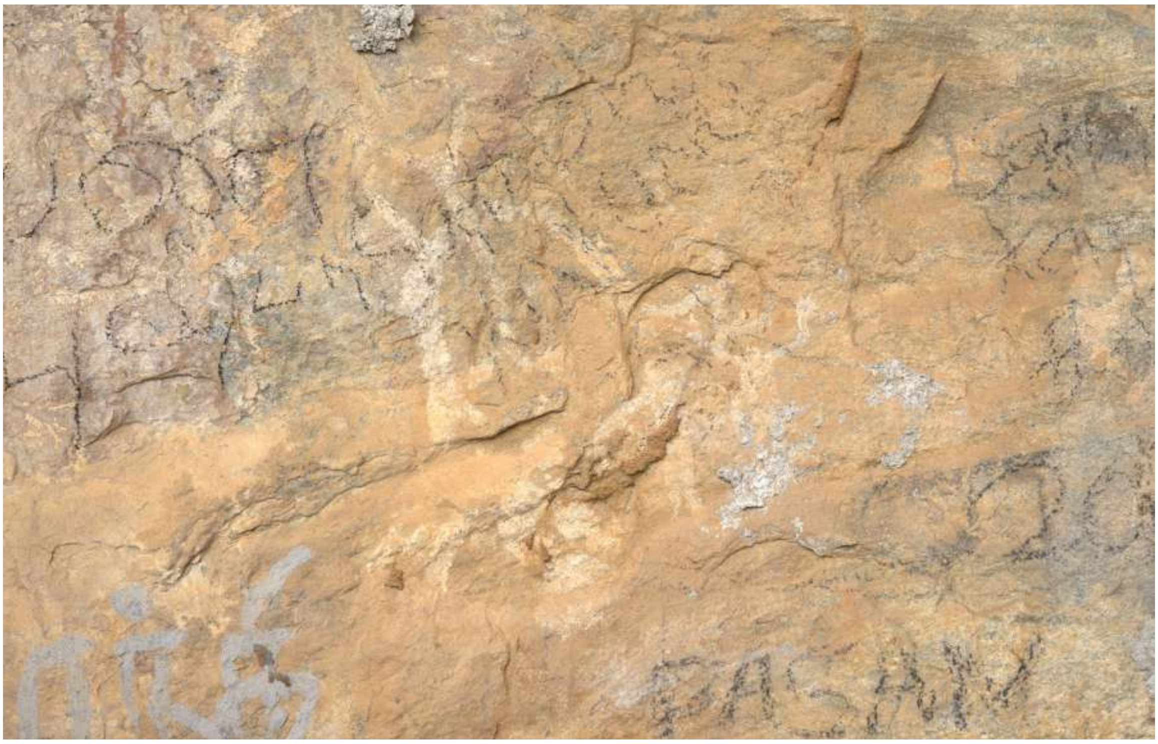


Fig. 4.45.26a Humans

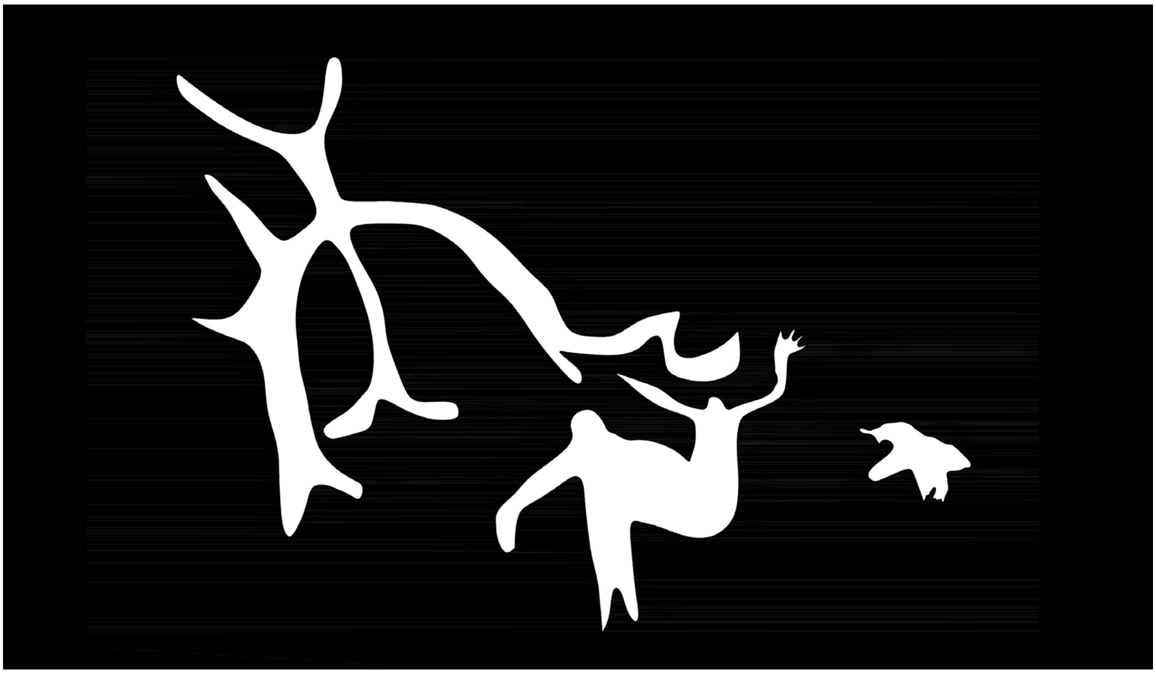


Fig. 4.45.26b Humans

The figure made of white pigment may be an animal figure painted with thick multiple strokes in a circular manner. In a way representing all the body parts and folded hands, curves with no edges or rigid shapes. (Figs. 4.45.27a-4.45.27b).

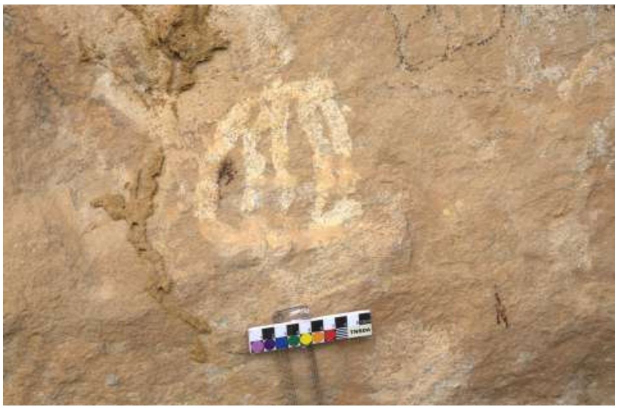


Fig. 4.45.27a Animal

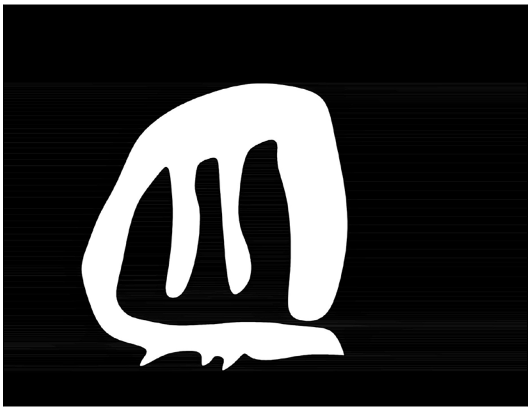


Fig. 4.45.27b Animal

Two birds are drawn with white pigment. The bird is shown with a beak, a thick comb like a rooster and two legs, with feathers also noticed. (Figs. 4.45.28a-4.45.28b).

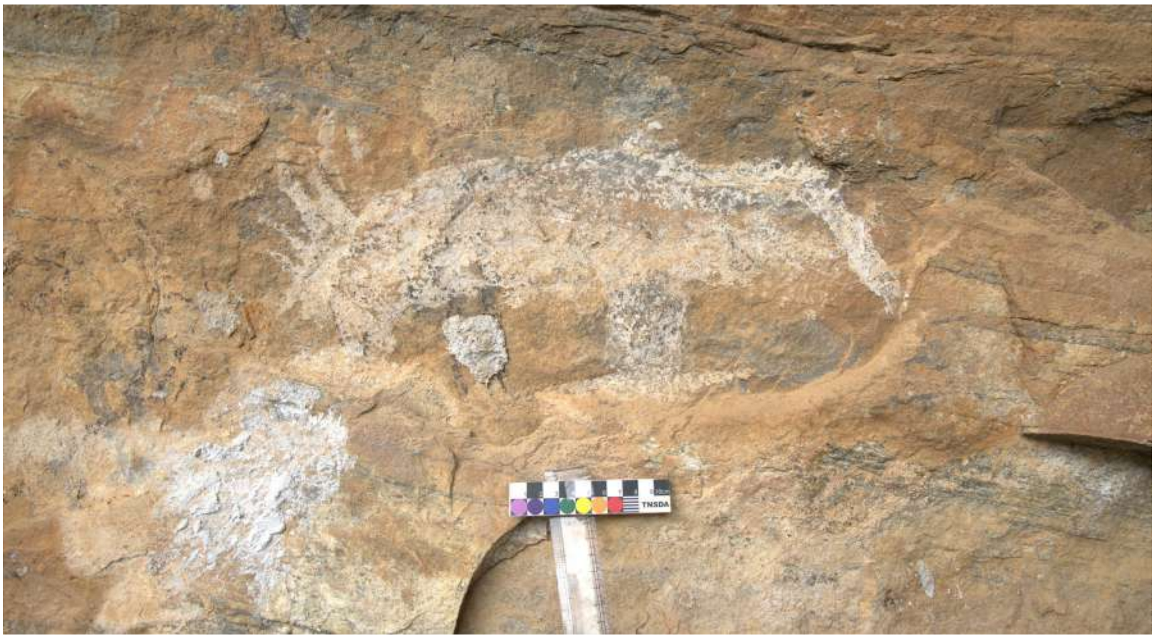


Fig. 4.45.28a Bird

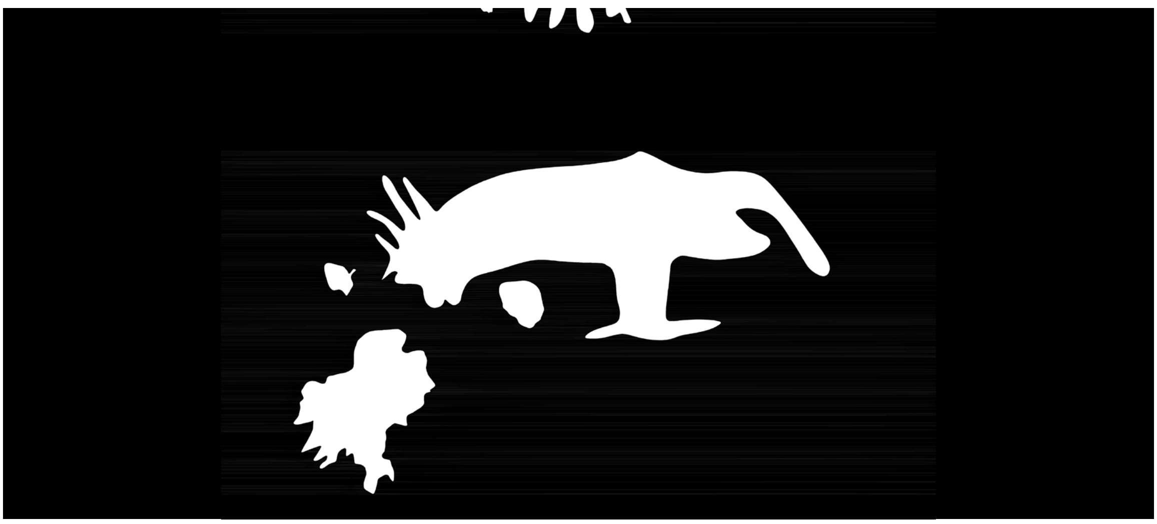


Fig. 4.45.28b Bird

This panel shows a fight scene between humans, they are red in colour. Humans are in a moving posture with extended hands and legs. It seems they were holding some long object, which could be a weapon. The complete theme of the painting is not clear. (Figs. 4.45.29a-4.45.29b).

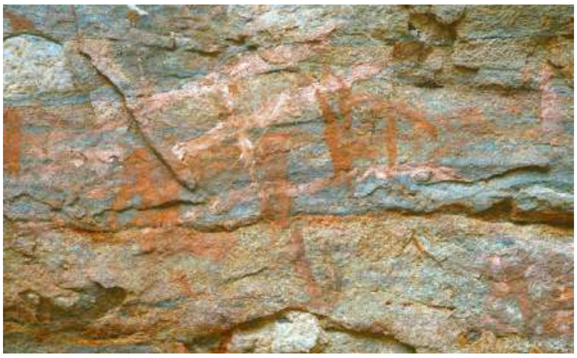


Fig. 4.45.29a Battle Scene

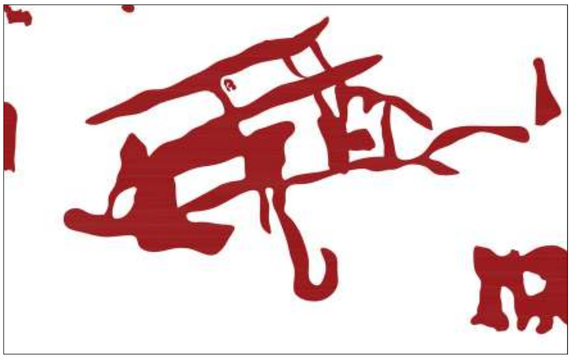


Fig. 4.45.29b Battle Scene

The picture shows that both red and white pigments were used. There are two human figures. The last one is drawn with extended legs, hands holding an object in the right looks like an ithyphallic in nature. To the right of it another white ochre huamn figure with long body short legs and extended hands is seen (Figs. 4.45.30a-4.45.30b).

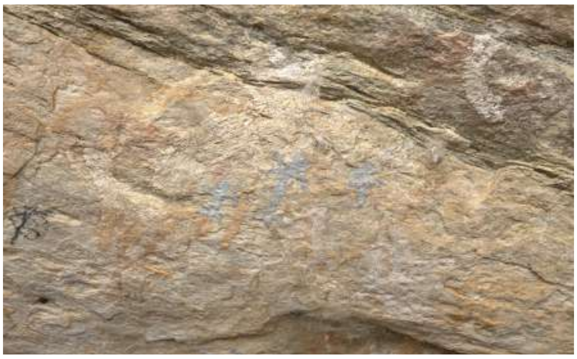


Fig. 4.45.30a Humans

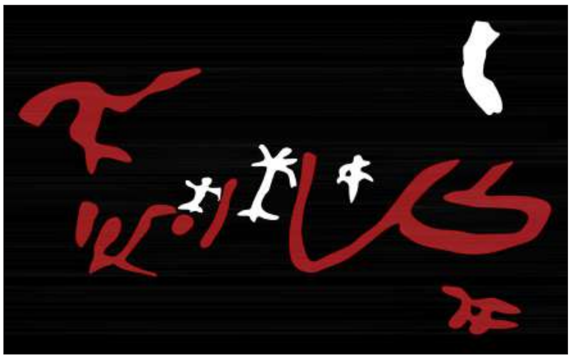


Fig. 4.45.30b Humans

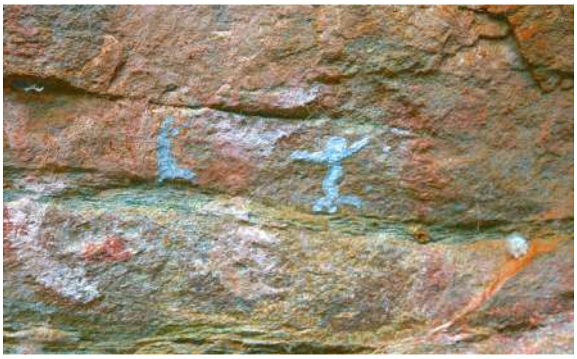


Fig. 4.45.31a Humans

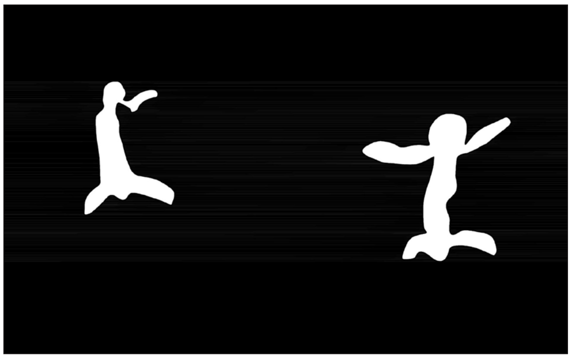


Fig. 4.45.31b Humans

In this panel, there are two human figures depicted in white colour. They are in a linear pattern with extended hands and legs, circular/round head is common among the two paintings. But the right human figure is ithyphallic in nature. (Figs. 4.45.31a-4.45.31b).

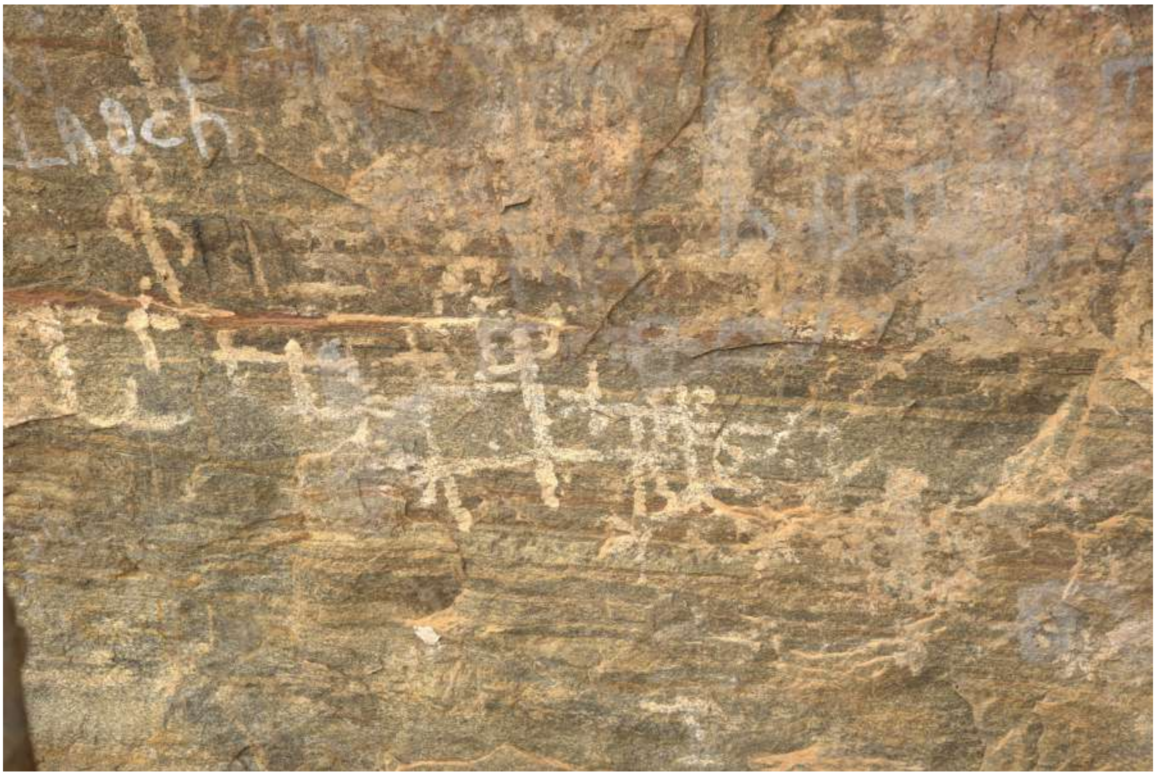


Fig. 4.45.32a Humans

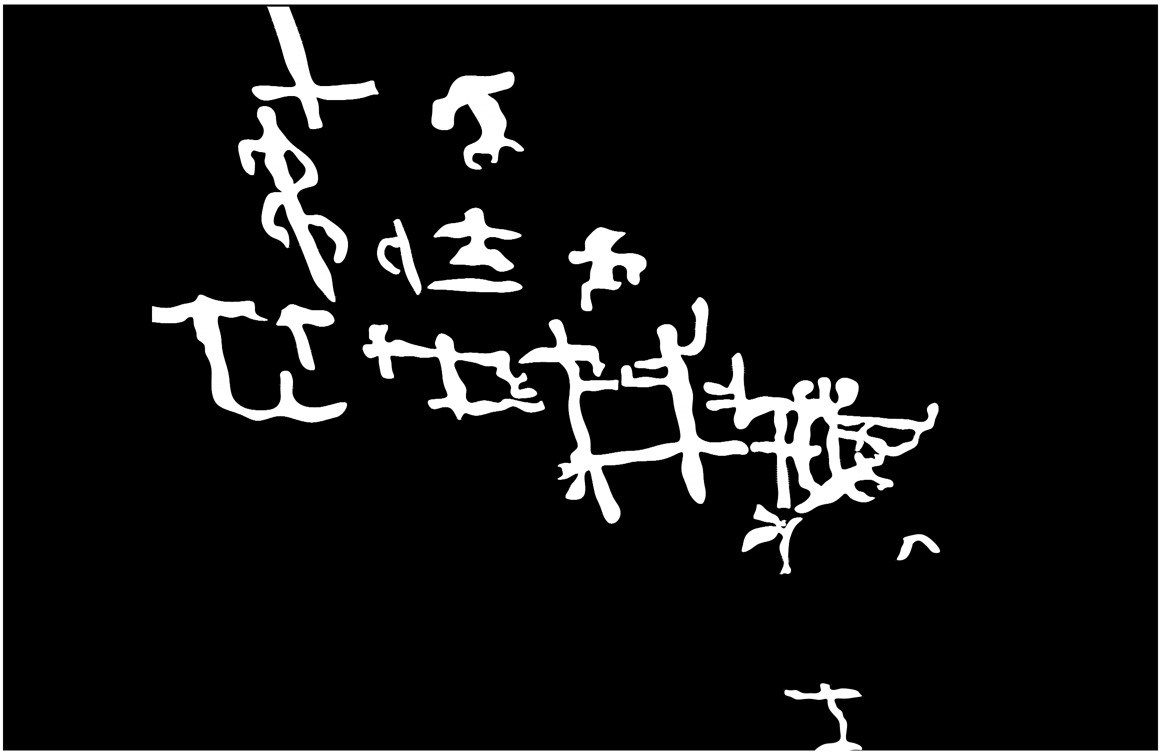


Fig. 4.45.32b Humans

The rock shelter has white paintings. 11 humans are standing in a line in a slanting position, holding hands in a celebratory mood. Humans are drawn in simple strokes. Mostly all are faded in condition. (Figs. 4.45.32a-4.45.32b).

The rock shelter paintings are made of red ochre and white pigment. The white paintings are overlapping on the red. The human figures are drawn in multiple postures. Humans are represented in a dancing manner and they have outstretched hands and legs and are holding something in their hands, it looks like a festival are a ritual based dance. (Figs. 4.45.33a-4.45.33b).

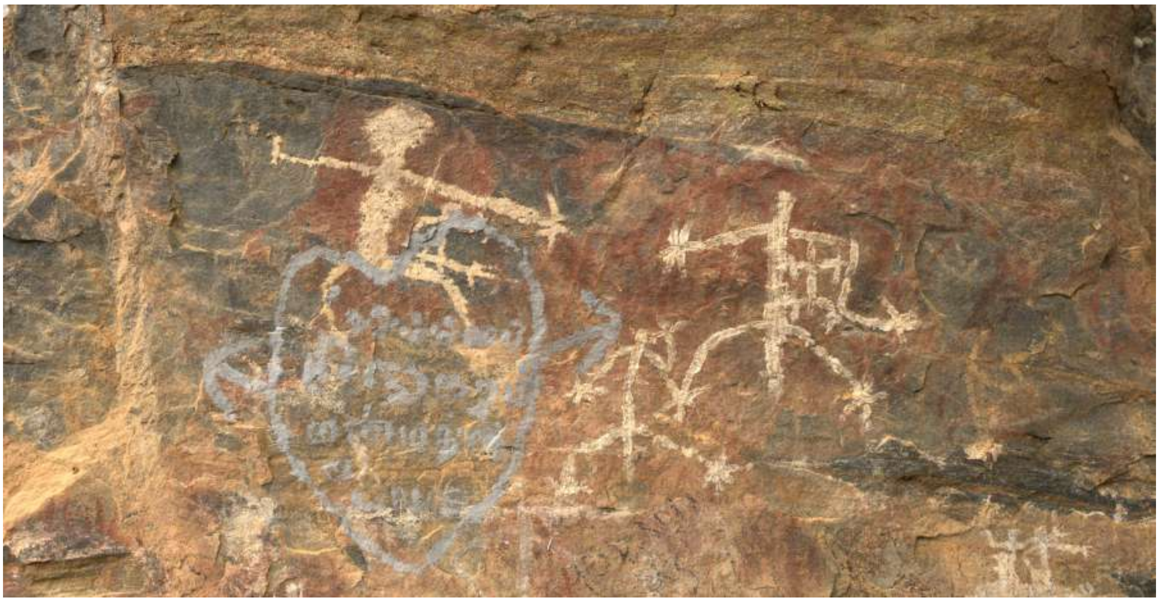


Fig. 4.45.33a Humans and animal riders

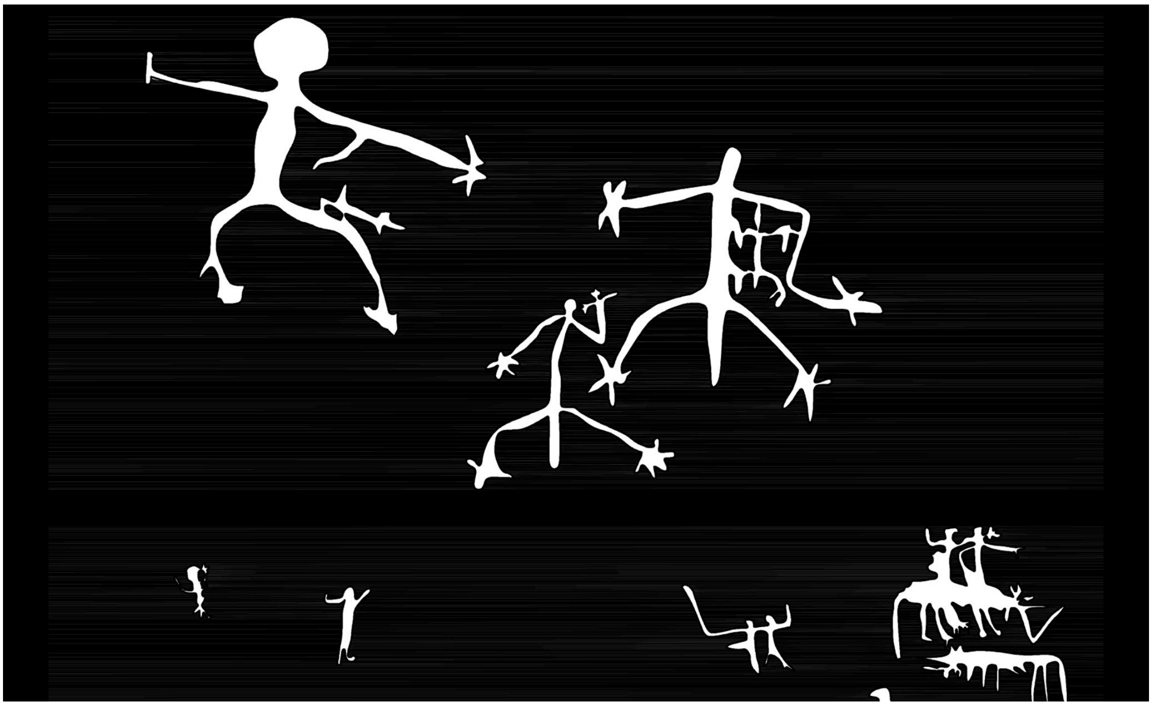


Fig. 4.45.33b Humans and animal riders

These paintings are made of white pigment and human figures are drawn. Many human figures are drawn in different postures. These paintings are overlapping and are faded. (Figs. 4.45.34a-4.45.34b).

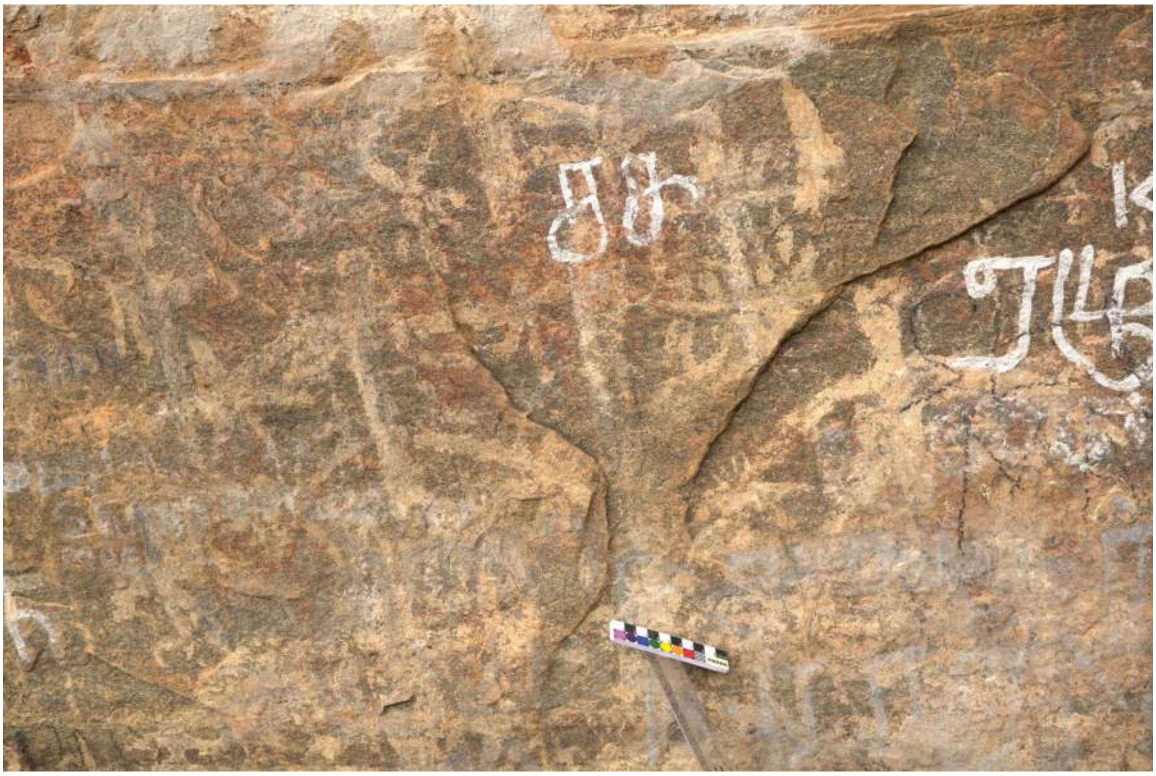


Fig. 4.45.34a Humans

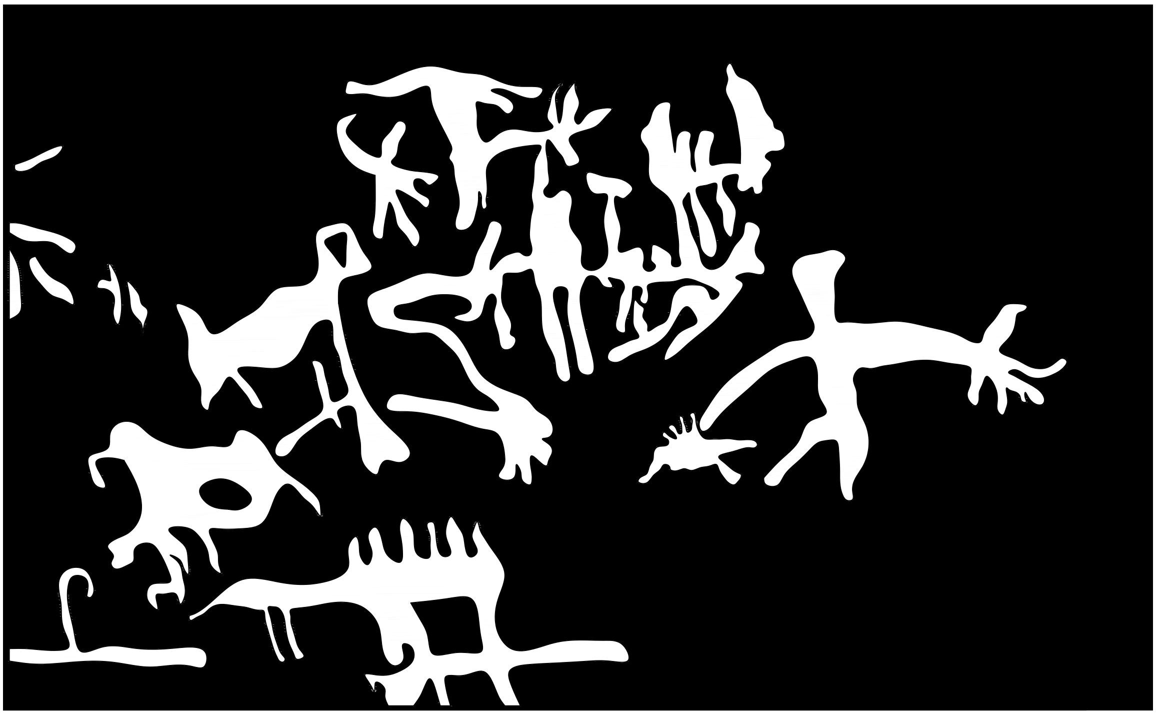


Fig. 4.45.34b Humans

In this rock shelter, paintings are made of white pigment. Four human figures are drawn in different positions. Three human figures are in a group dance, and another human is drawn in a single image, and there is an animal that looks like a reptile. (Figs. 4.45.35a-4.45.35b).

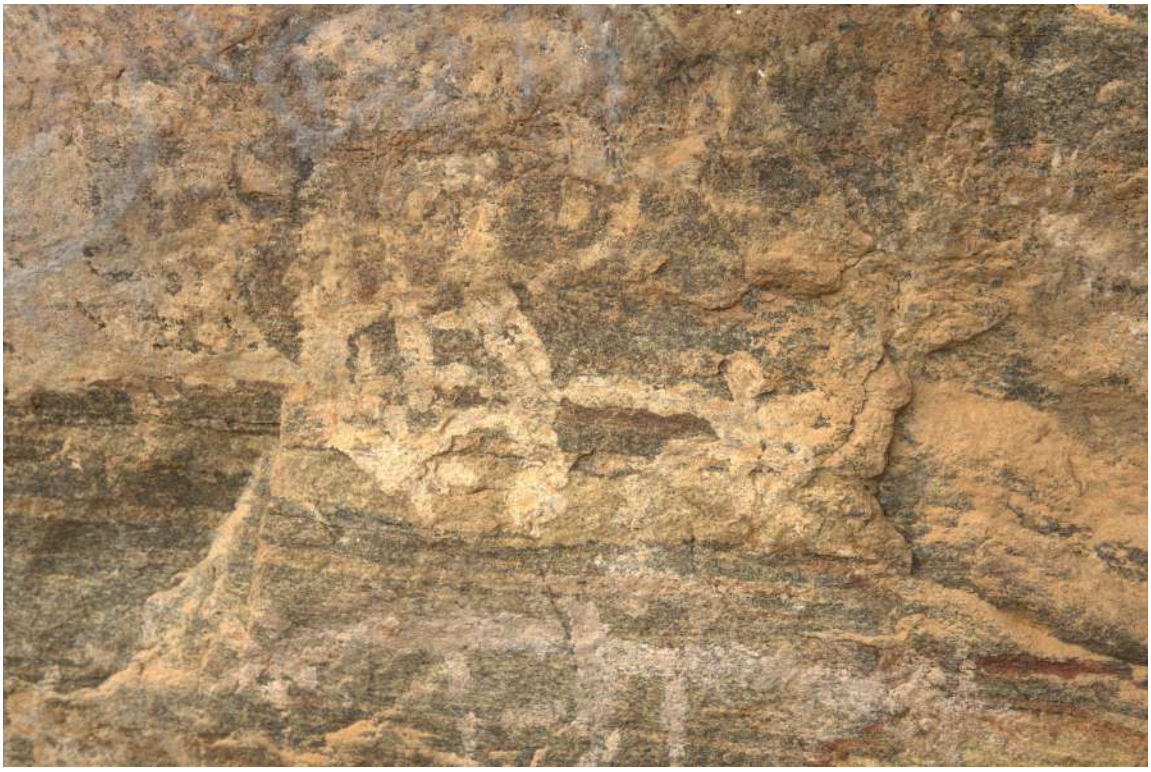


Fig. 4.45.34a Humans

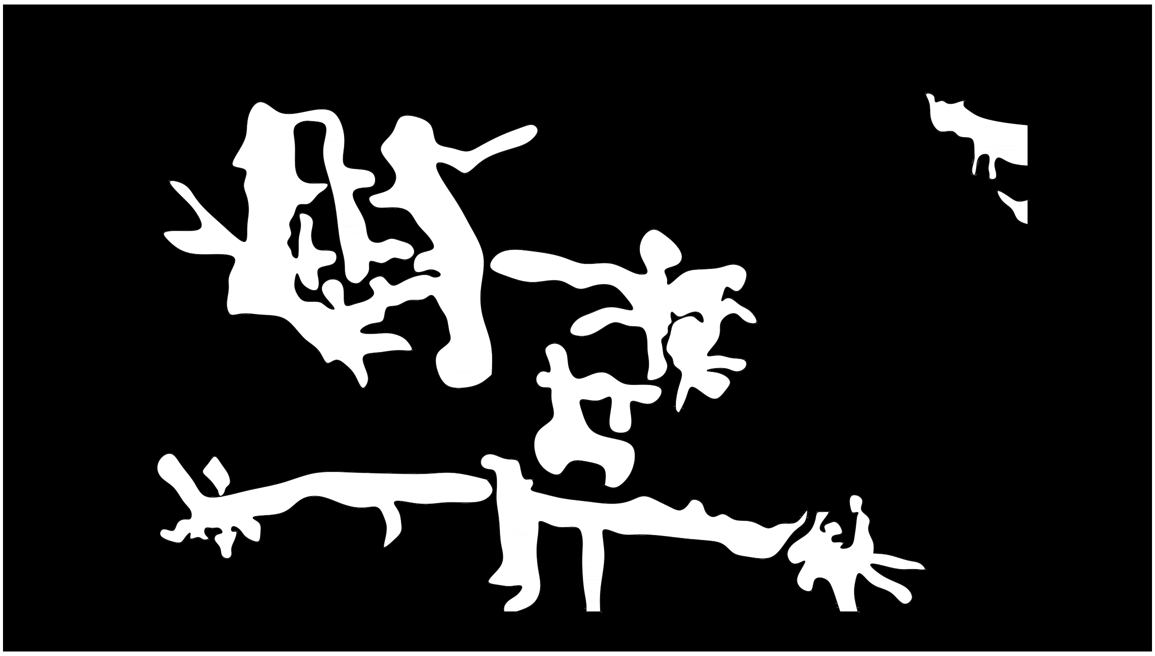


Fig. 4.45.35b Humans

The rock shelter is having white paintings. Human figures and animal figures are painted here. Two humans are sitting on an animal that looks like an elephant and below this one more animal figure is drawn. On the left, two human figures are seen in a dancing pose. (Figs. 4.45.36a-4.45.36b).

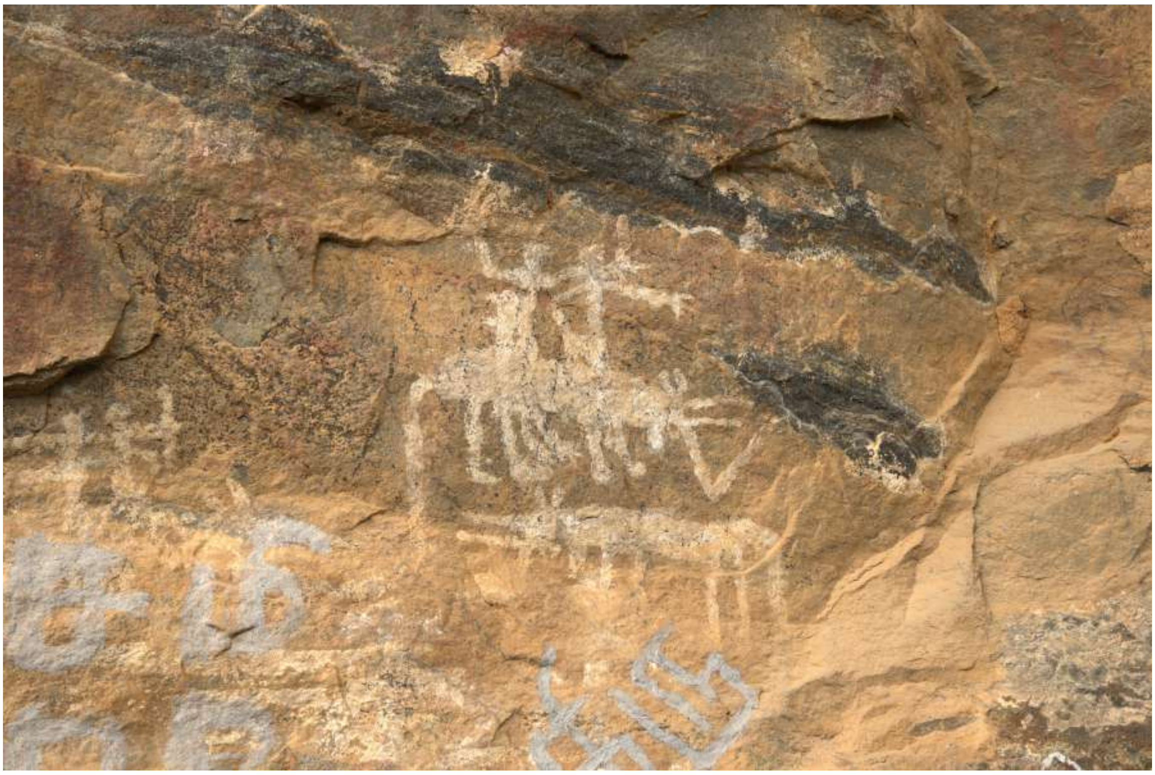


Fig. 4.45.36a Animal rider, animal and humans

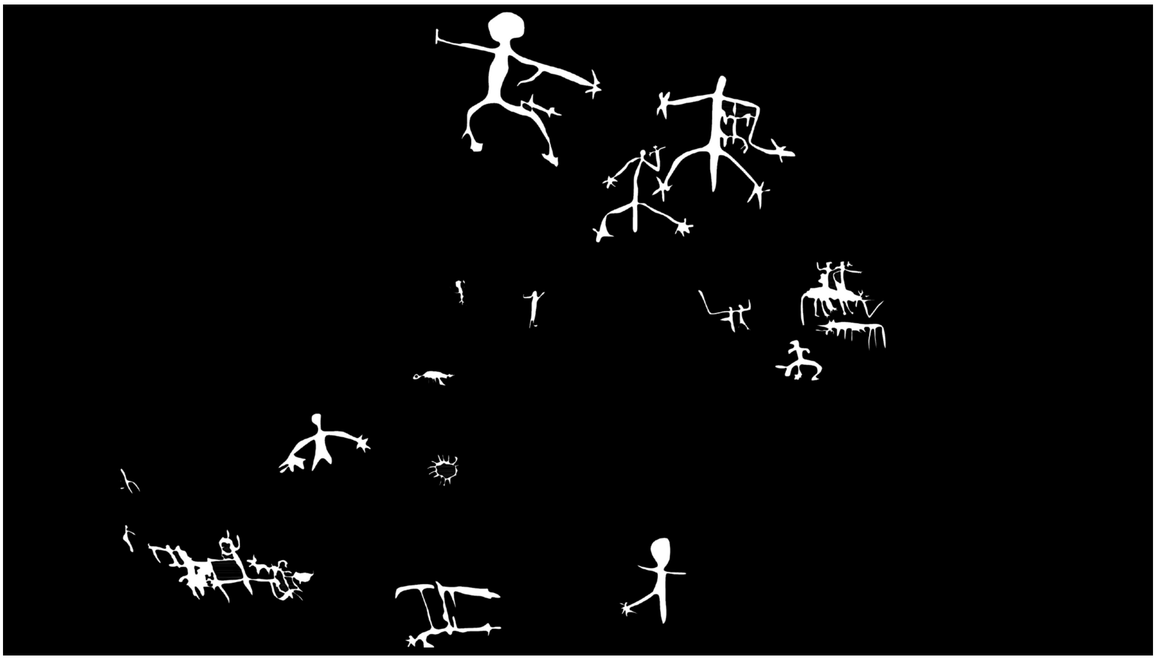


Fig. 4.45.36b Animal rider, animal and humans

The shelter shows eight red human figures in an infilled and linear pattern. Surrounding these human figures there are seven simple line figures of floral representation with a single vertical line of varying length. Another group of people were drawn in this panel, at left are two human figures of an adult and a child with extended hands and animal figures are next to them. Another large animal resembles a boar (Figs. 4.45.37a-4.45.37b).

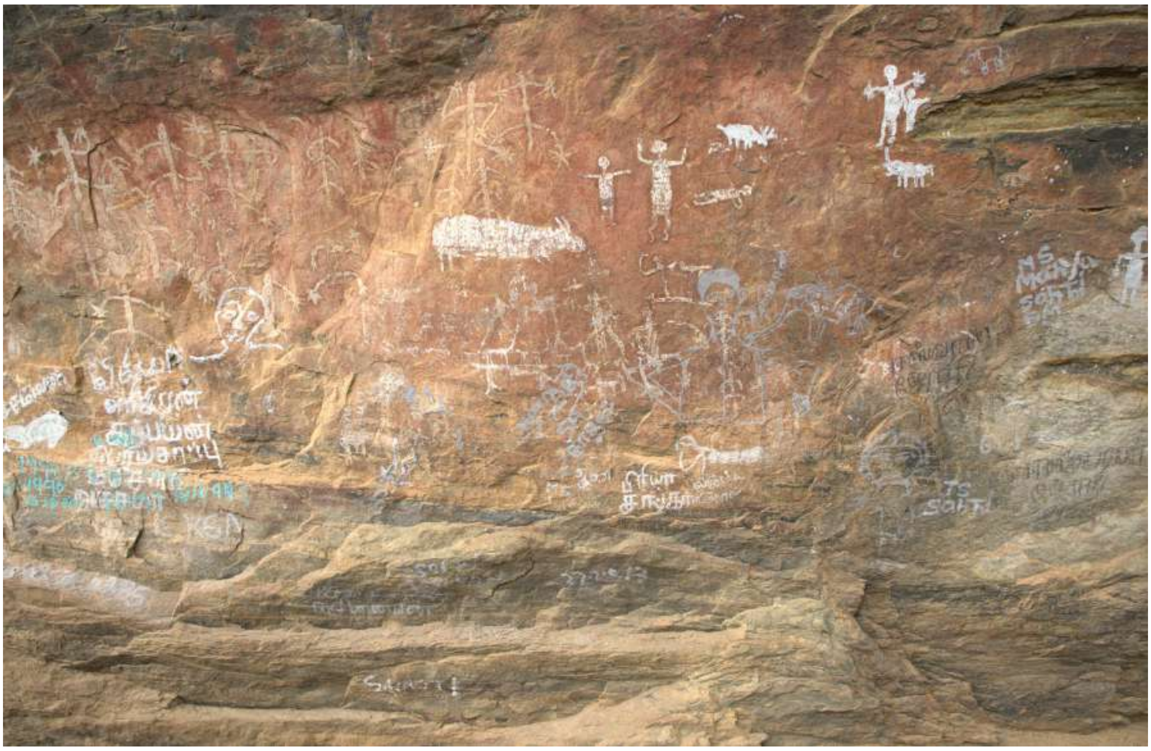


Fig. 4.45.37a Humans and animals

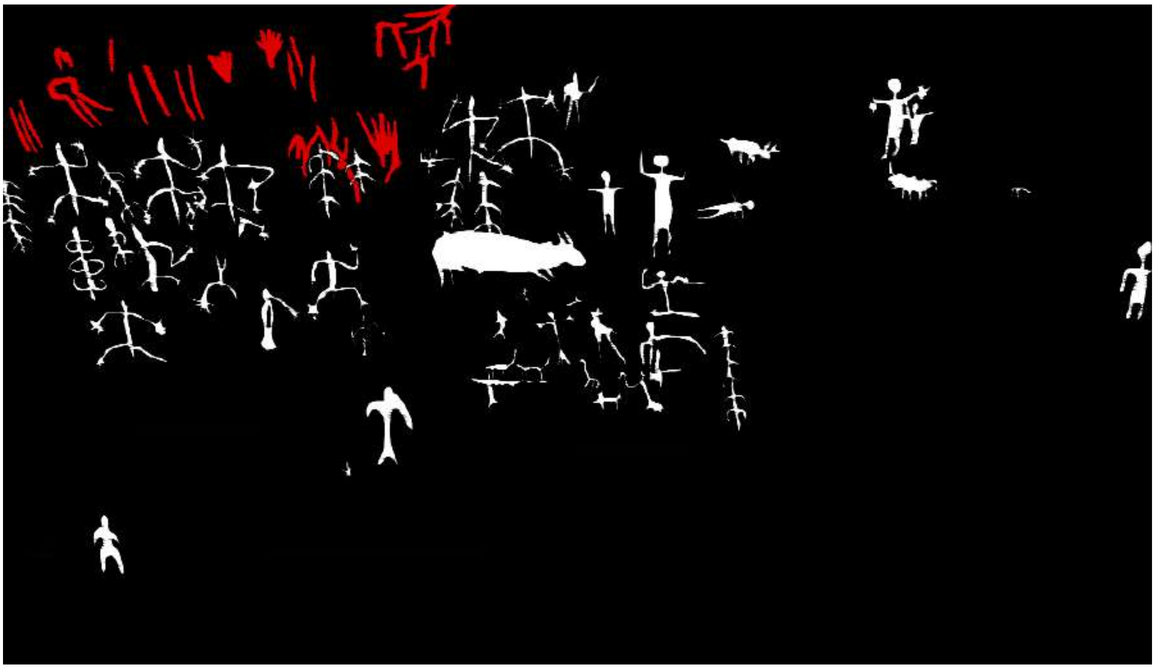


Fig. 4.45.37b Humans and animals

The rock shelter is having paintings both in white and red colours. Animals are painted in red and white. The animal figures are painted in different manner and they are meeting each other. (Figs. 4.45.38a-4.45.38b).

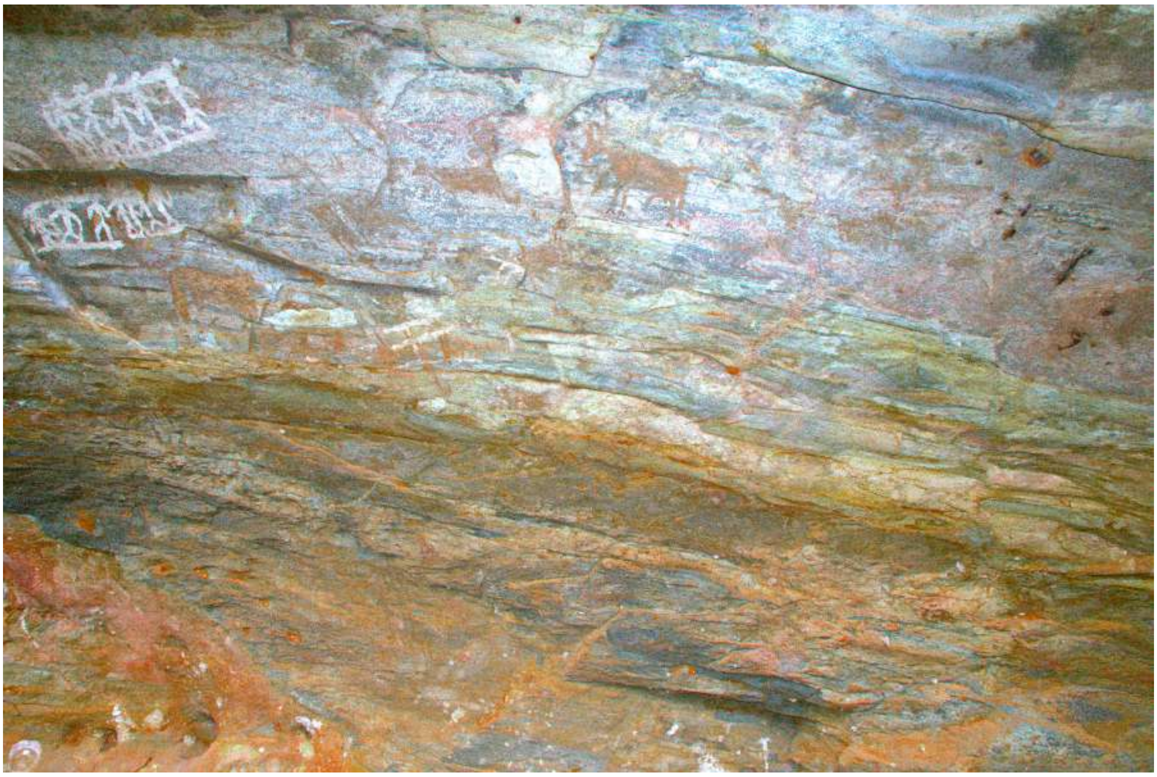


Fig. 4.45.38a Human and animals

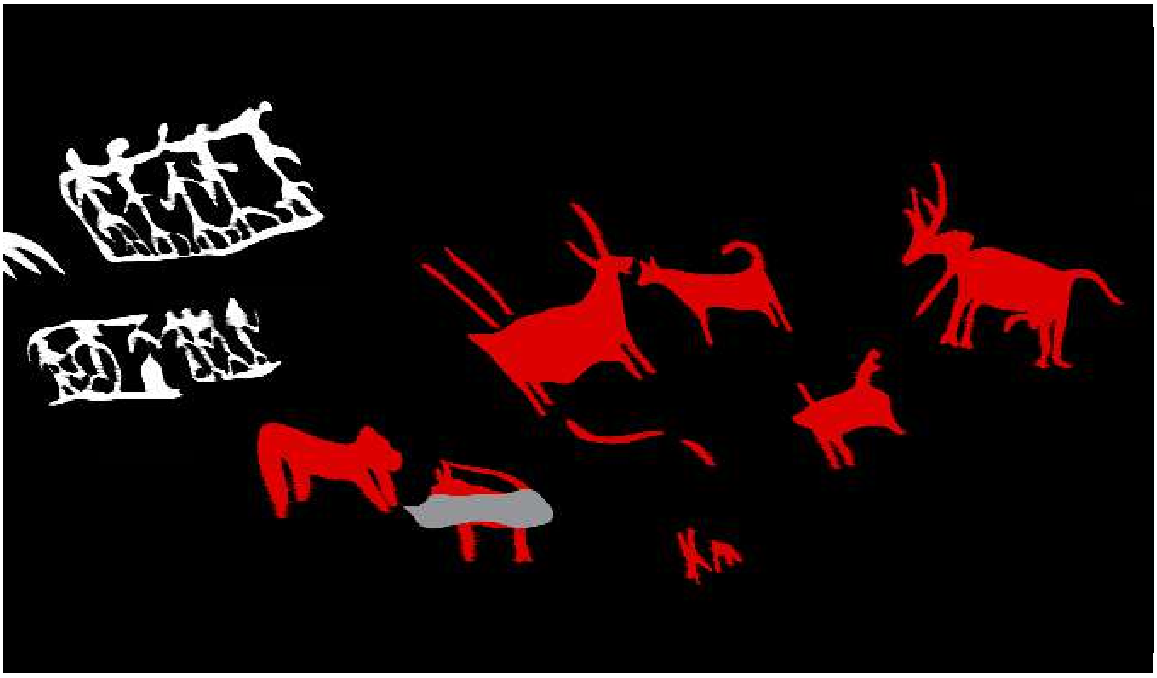


Fig. 4.45.38b Human and animals

There are four human figures painted in white colour, the left one is drawn in a flexible manner. They are having round heads and infilled lines, the hands are projected here in thick lines and curved. Below these four human figures, smaller in size without-stretched hands, look like dancing are depicted. (Figs. 4.45.39a-4.45.39b).

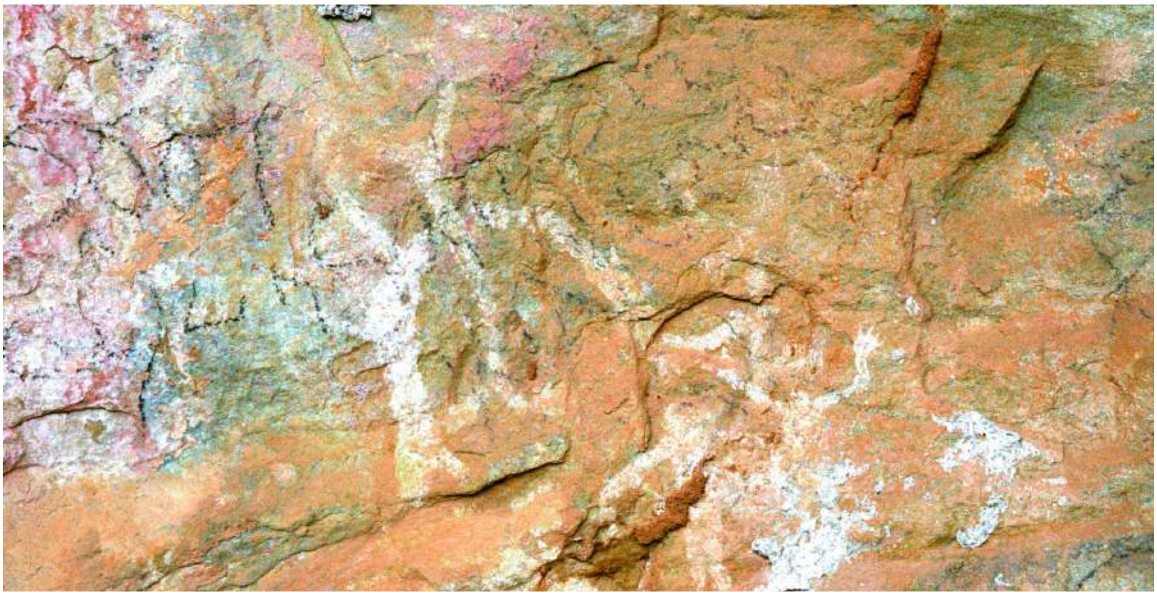


Fig. 4.45.39a Humans

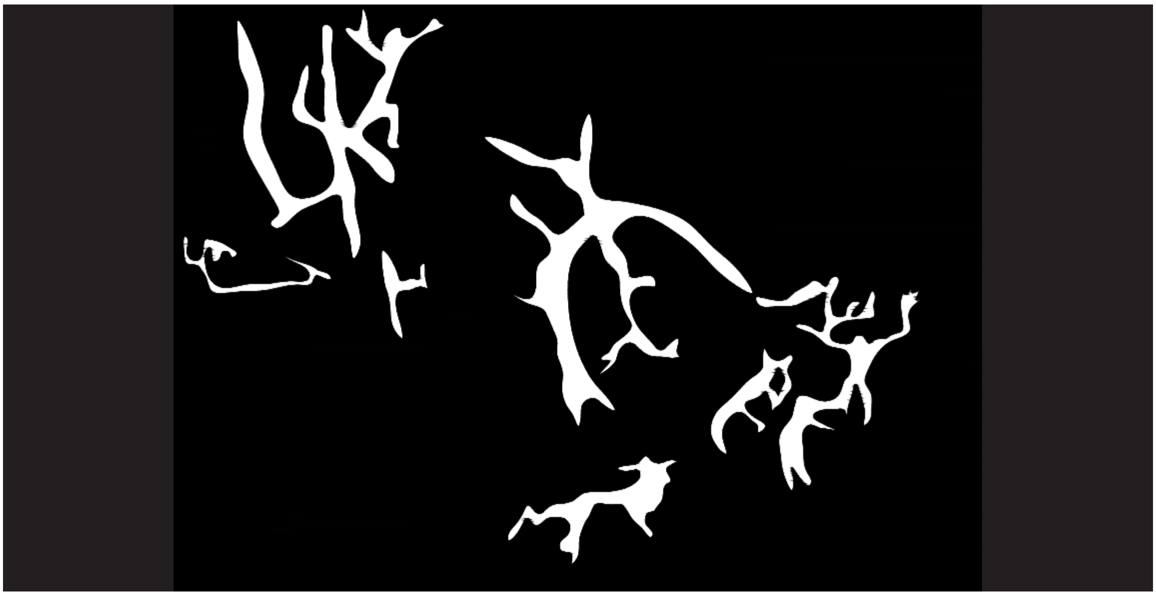
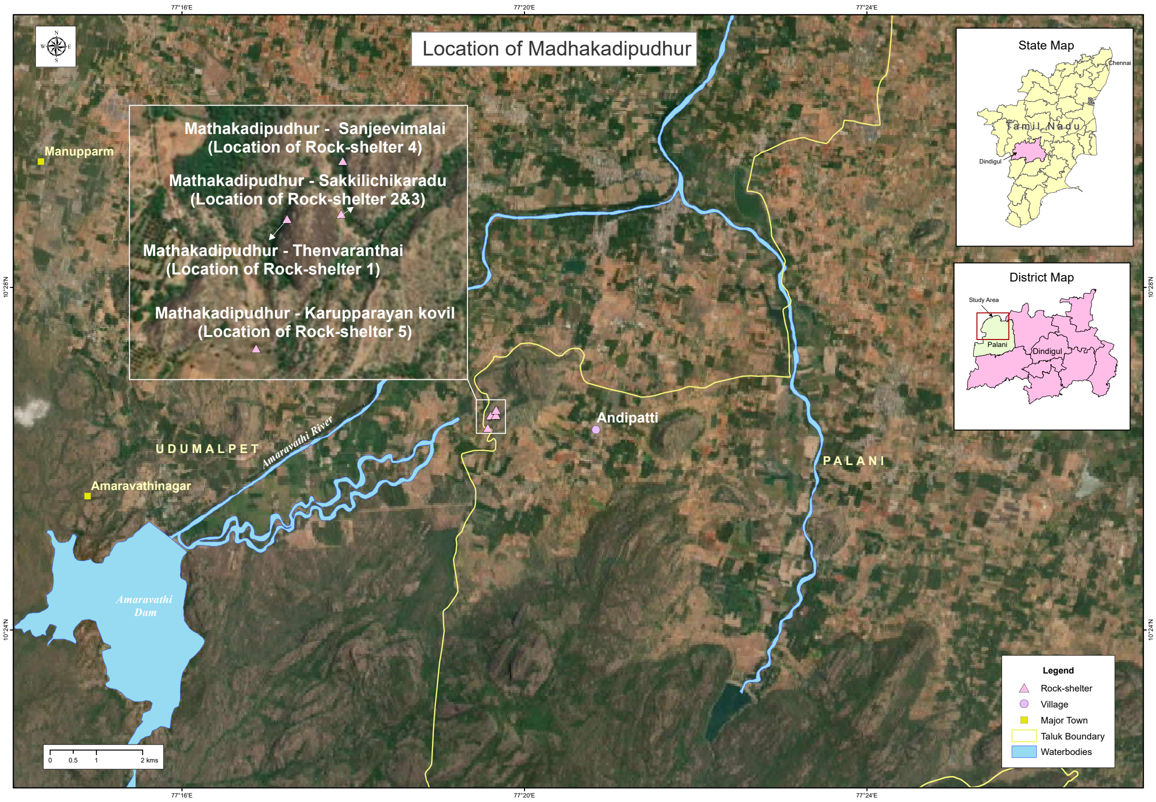


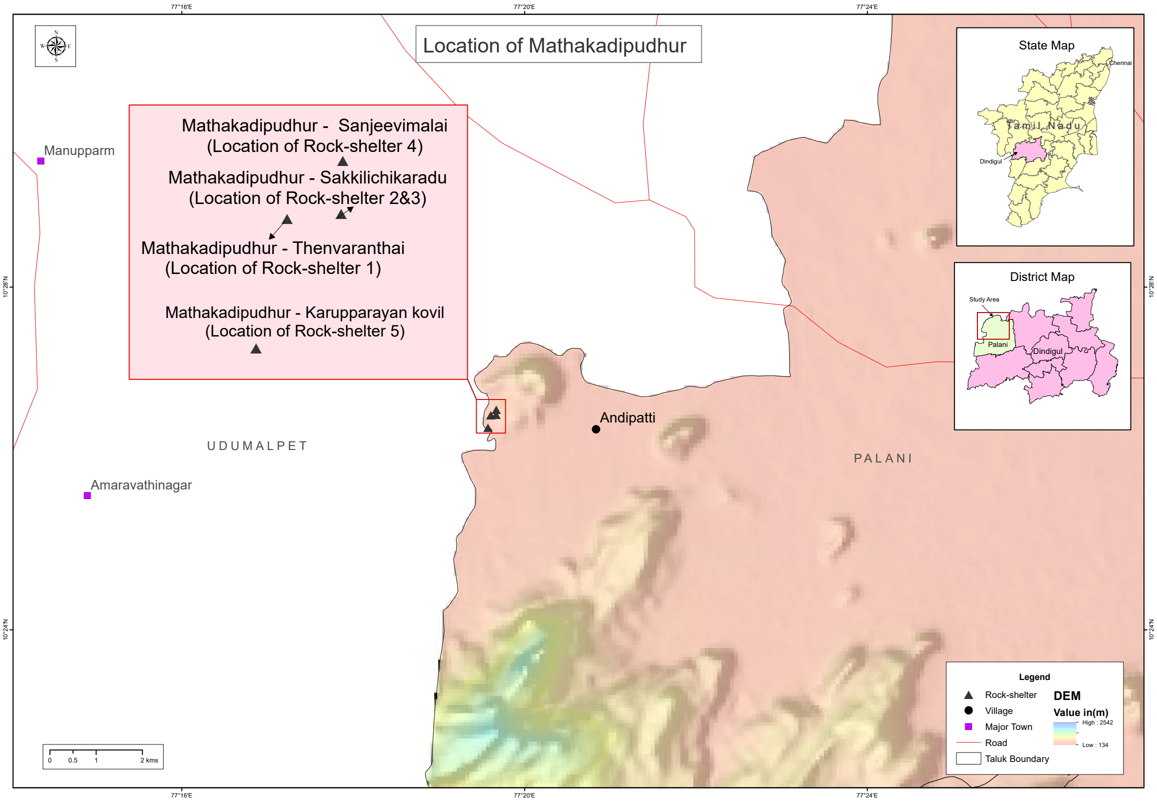
Fig. 4.45.39b Humans

4.46 Madhakadipudhur

Madhakadipudhur lies at a distance of 10 km to the south of Kolumam which is located on the Udumalaipettai-Palani road at a distance of 16 km to the east of Udumalaipettai (10.44173 N, 77.32677 E) (Maps 4.46.1-4.46.2). There is a series of rock shelters out of which four rock shelters are having paintings. All the rock shelters are overlooking the river Amaravathi (Anporunai). The first rock shelter is located at the foothill about half a kilometer from Madhakadipudhur.


Location of Madhakadipudhur
Mathakadipudhur - Sanjeevimalai (Location of Rock-shelter 4)
Mathakadipudhur - Sakkilichikaradu (Location of Rock-shelter 2&3)
Mathakadipudhur - Thenvaranthai (Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Mathakadipudhur - Karupparayan kovil (Location of Rock-shelter 5)
Manupparm
Amaravathinagar
UDUMALPET
Amaravathi River
Amaravathi Dam
Andipatti
PALANI
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Dindigul
District Map
Study Area
Palani
Dindigul
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Major Town
Taluk Boundary
Waterbodies
0 0.5 1 2 kms
77°16'E
77°20'E
77°24'E
10°28'N
10°24'N

Map 4.46.1 Location of the rock shelter


Location of Mathakadipudhur
Mathakadipudhur - Sanjeevimalai (Location of Rock-shelter 4)
Mathakadipudhur - Sakkilichikaradu (Location of Rock-shelter 2&3)
Mathakadipudhur - Thenvaranthai (Location of Rock-shelter 1)
Mathakadipudhur - Karupparayan kovil (Location of Rock-shelter 5)
Manupparm
Amaravathinagar
UDUMALPET
Andipatti
PALANI
State Map
Tamil Nadu
Chennai
Dindigul
District Map
Study Area
Palani
Dindigul
Legend
Rock-shelter
Village
Major Town
Road
Taluk Boundary
DEM
Value in(m)
High : 2542
Low : 134
0 0.5 1 2 kms
77°16'E
77°20'E
77°24'E
10°28'N
10°24'N

Map 4.46.2 Location of the rock shelter

Rock Shelter- I (Thenvaranthai)

The first rock shelter facing west is located at 249 m AMSL and it has a total length of 44.20 m, a height of about 15 m and a depth of about 10 m. This is the most spacious rock shelter encountered in this region. The rock paintings are observed on the slope of the rock shelter that indicate their use for the social gathering and some ritual performance. The rituals might have taken place periodically as the paintings are found in various groups. The diachronic nature of the paintings suggests that they might have been executed periodically over several centuries. The floor of the rock shelter was examined to identify the cultural activities. A few potsherds were collected along with quartz material and chert leading us to take a trial trench in the shelter (Figs. 4.46.1-4.46.2).

Trail Trench

A trail trench measuring 1x1 m is laid opposite to the rock painting labelled as GH located 6.60 m away from the index peg. After the removal of the humus, a small dig has been carried out in the western half of the trench (50cm) to understand the cultural sequence, if any.

At a depth of 2-4 cm chert blade is found. Microlithic tools made of quartz and chert and bone tools have also been collected. A fluted microlithic chert was also collected at a depth of 20 cm suggesting these tools were manufactured in this rock shelter.

The presence of microlithic tools indicates the human occupation in the pre-Iron Age. However, the presence of microlithic tools did not express the presence of the microlithic phase with any certainty. The observation of rock painting executed both in red and white pigments is an indicating of long survival. The presence of iron objects such as swords, javelins and *valari* suggests that these paintings are mostly belonging to the Iron Age.

The presence of red ochre below the white is suggestive of red is earlier than white. As the white pigments are superimposed on the red paintings, the real posture could not be ascertained. Keeping in view of material evidences, one may suggest the microlithic phase was the initial occupation and it deserted later and was reoccupied during the Iron Age.

One of the important paints that needs to be observed is that several Neolithic grinding grooves were observed opposite to the rock shelter located just behind the Rock-shelter-I locally called Sakkilichimalai. The huge space existed in the rock shelter is meant for periodical group activities. A kind of community space.

According to Prof. A. Chellaperumal, the overall observation of two rock shelters is a reflective of human struggle against the fauna. The almost absence of plant representation and the presence of animals is another dimension of human struggle against the animal kingdom. The absence of astronomical objects like the sun, moon, thunderbolt and lightning is also one kind of nature impart but that did not take place in rock art. The myth and legend are totally absent. The creation of myth and legend are to control the society or regulate the society.

The depiction in the Rock-shelter-II had some cognitive experience of the mind/ thinking process of the ancient human is more reflective in the Rock shelter-II. Based on this cognitive expression and representative of rock art one may say that Rock-shelter-II is later than Rock-shelter-I (Figs. 4.46.3).

Neolithıc Grooves

While approaching towards Rock-shelter-II, edge grinding grooves were observed. These grooves are a clear indication of the preparation of celts. These celts whether they belong to the Neolithic period is yet to be ascertained.

Rock Shelter-III

The Rock Shelter-III is also a part of Sakkilichiparai. The Rock Shelter-II is located at the altitude of 412 m AMSL and Rock Shelter-III is located at an altitude of 236 m AMSL. The Rock Shelter-III is about 35 m to the north of Rock-Shelter-II. The selection of a place/ space is an indication of an artistic mind. All the paintings are done with white pigment, mostly of a thinner variety. The total length of the shelter from north to south is 30 m. The length of the shelter goes more than 50 m (Figs. 4.46.4).

Rock Shelter-IV

The Rock Shelter-IV is located on the way to Rock Shelter-II and III. This Rock-Shelter is locally called Sanjeevi Karadu facing west has a length of 9.80 m. It lies at an altitude of 248 m AMSL. There is only one group of paintings all executed with white pigment (Fig. 4.46.5).

There are two human figures standing opposite to each other and holding a disc like object. Just behind this, an individual is facing north another individual is depicted above these two figures. A bird like (cock) figure is shown with a human standing behind.

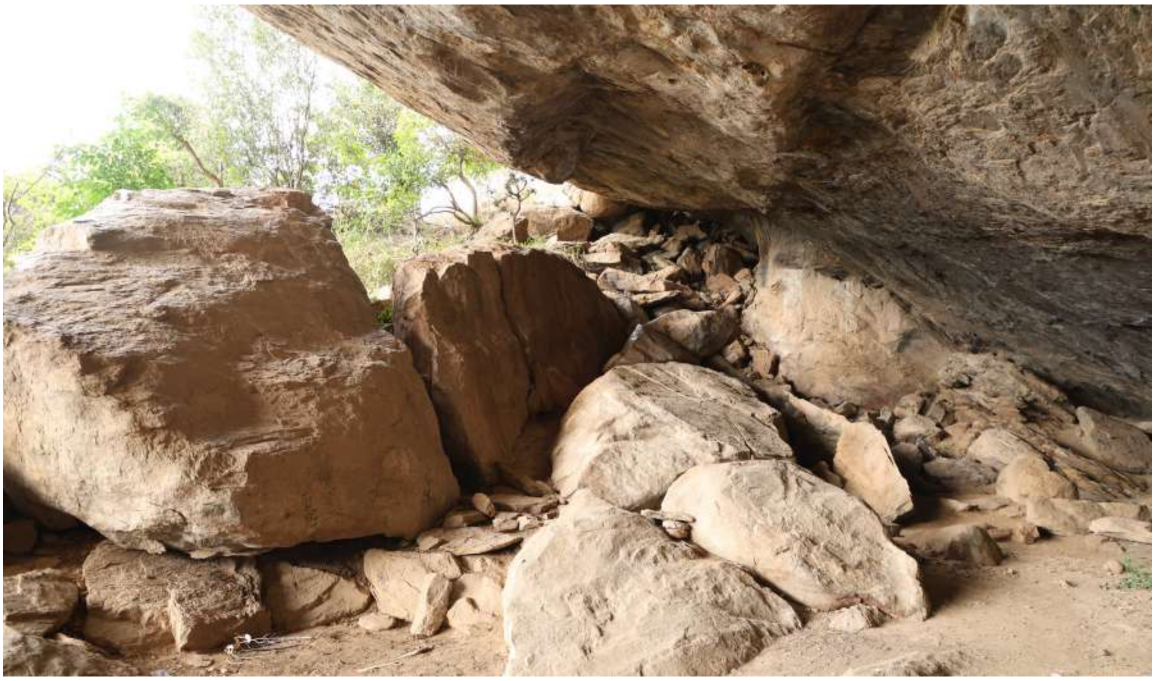


Fig. 4.46.1 General view of the rock shelter

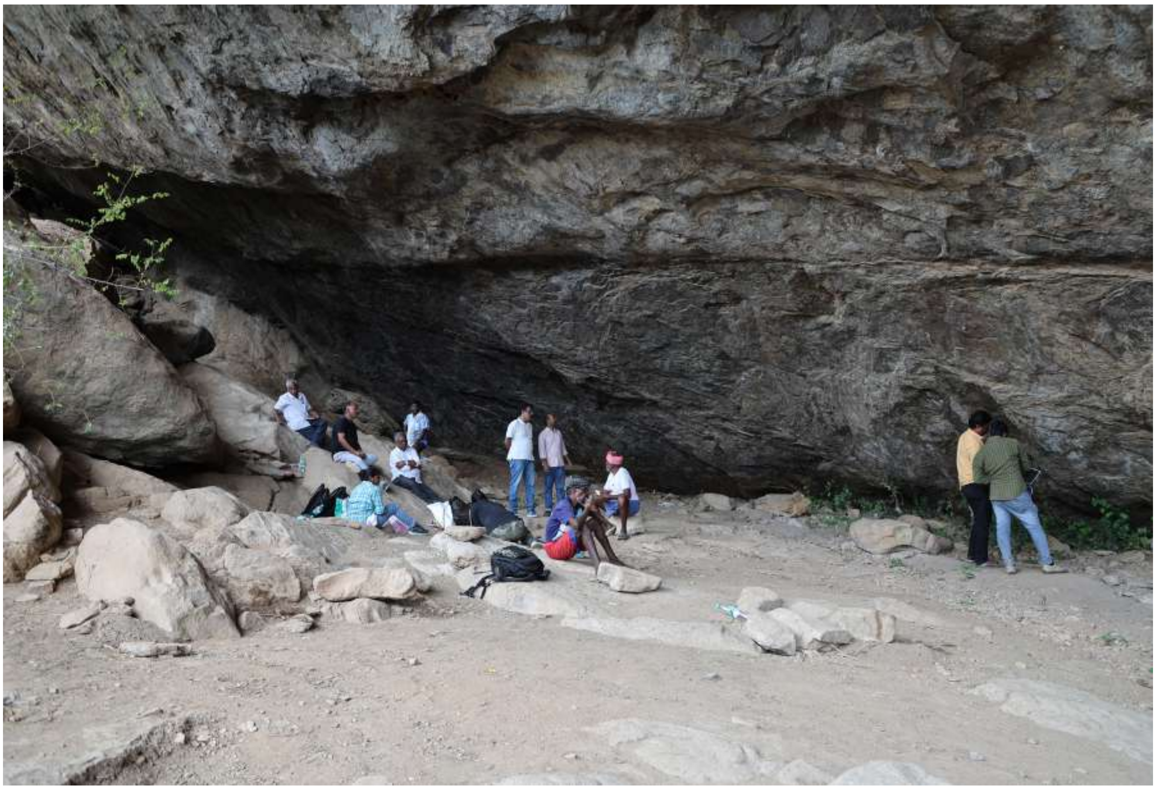


Fig. 4.46.2 General view of the rock shelter

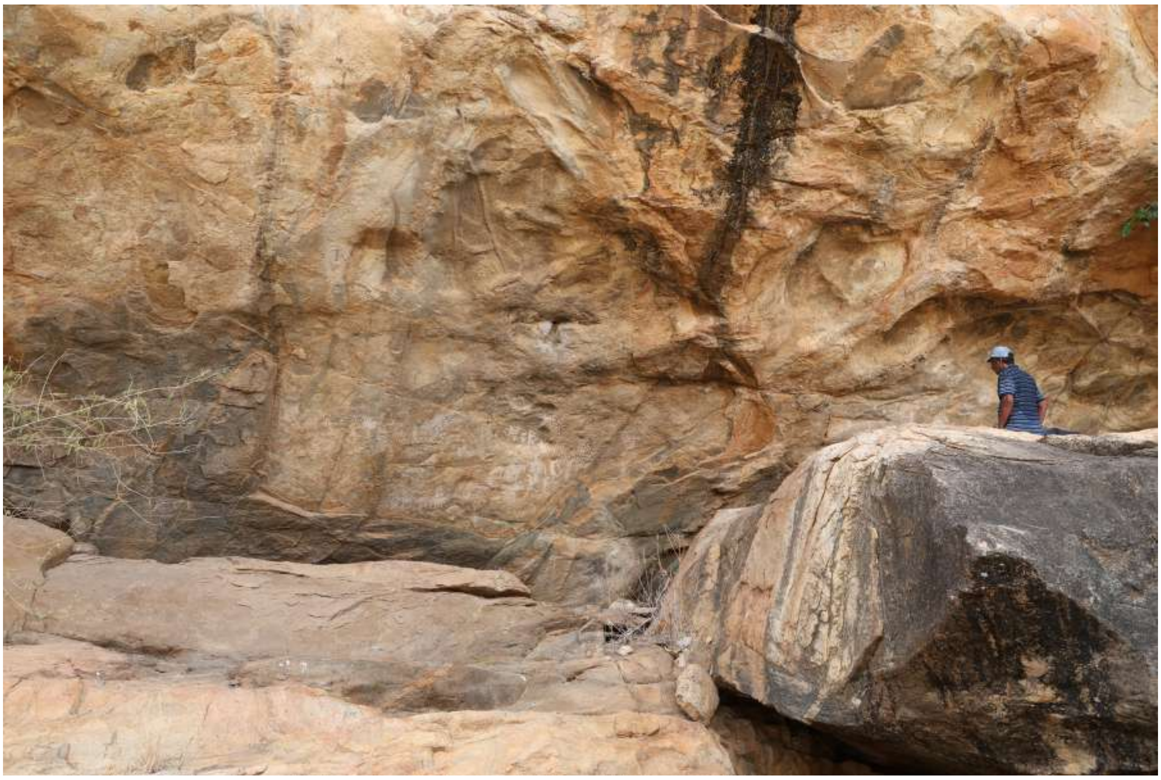


Fig. 4.46.3 General view of the rock shelter

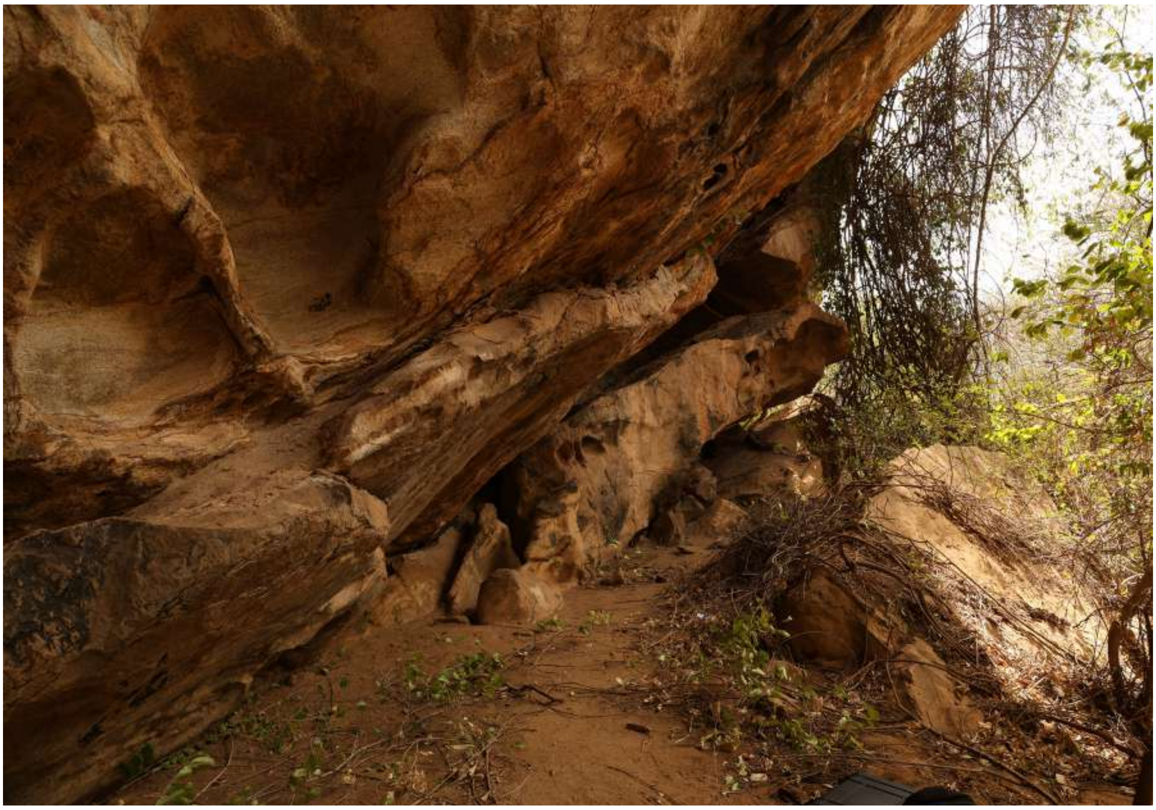


Fig. 4.46.4 General view of the rock shelter

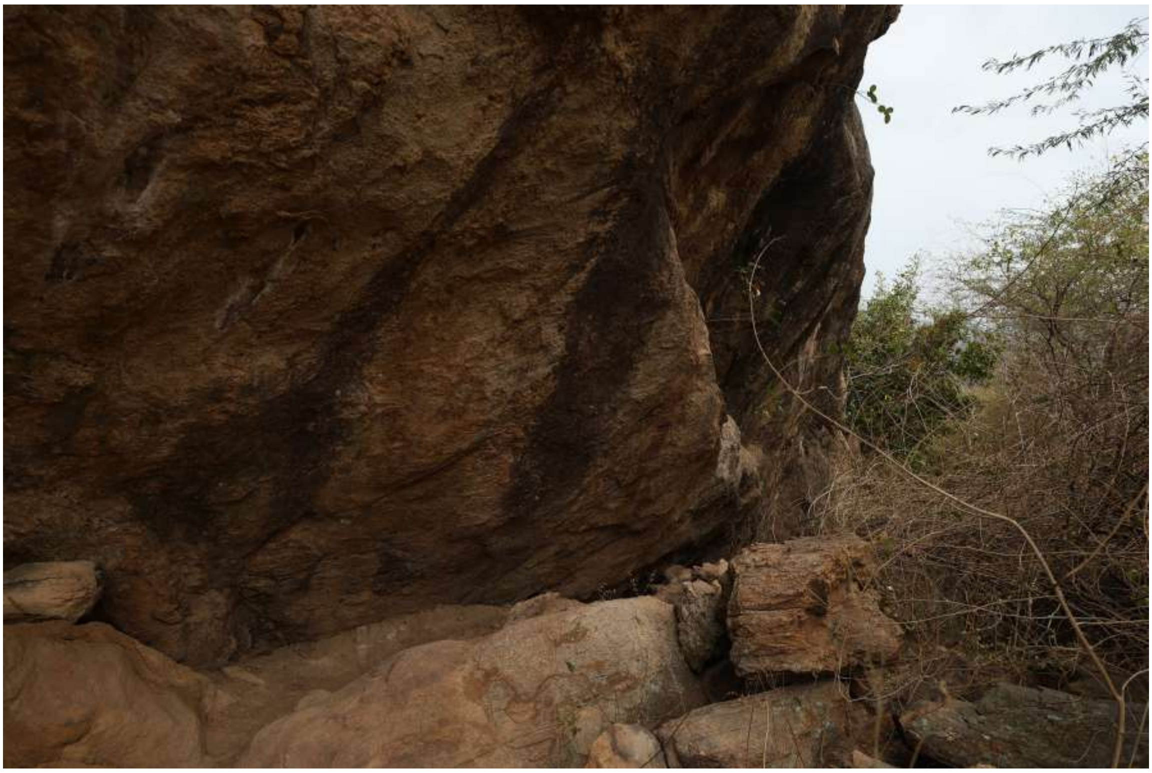


Fig. 4.46.5 General view of the rock shelter

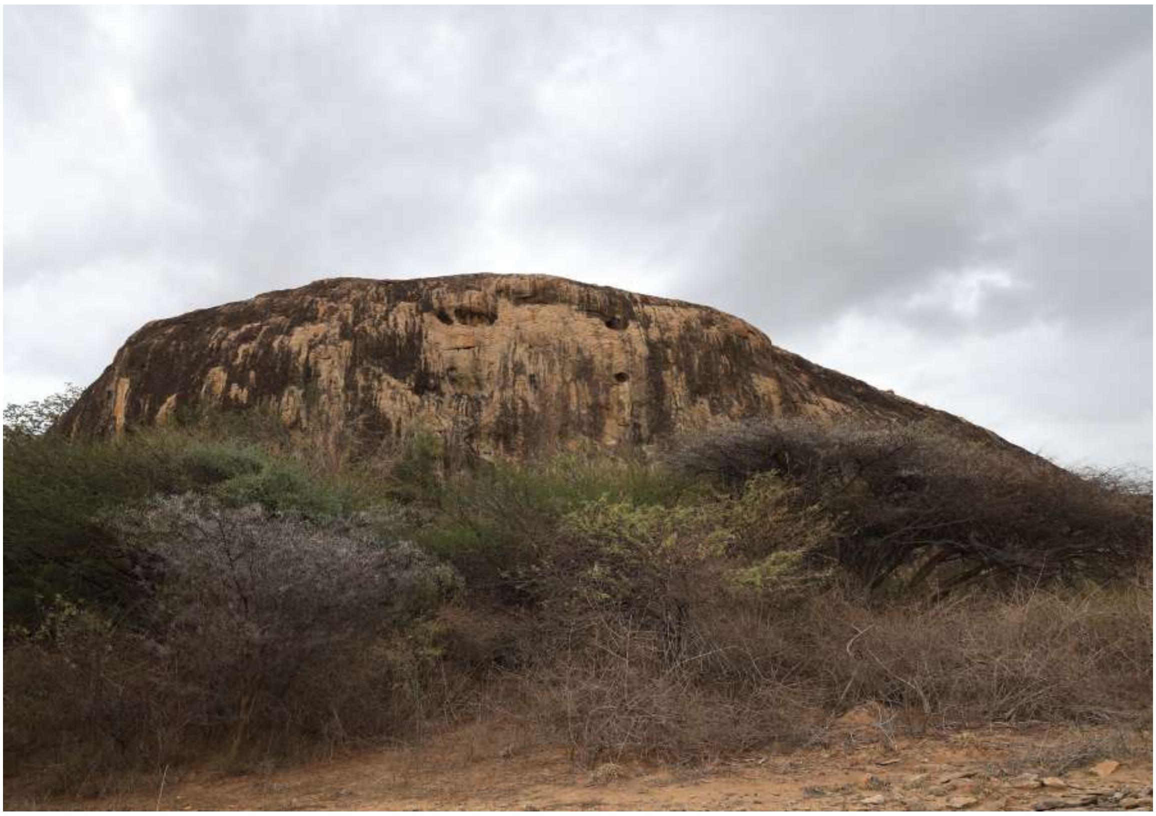


Fig. 4.46.6 General view of the rock shelter

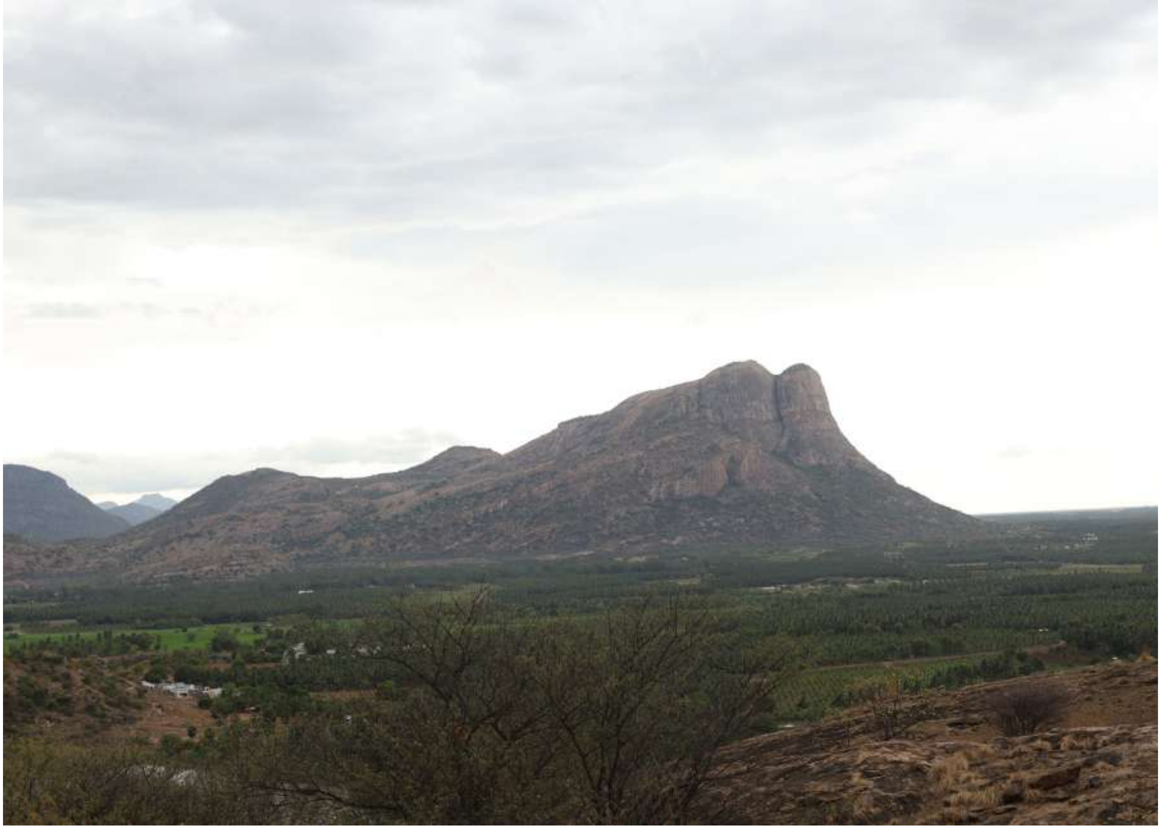


Fig. 4.46.7 General view of the rock shelter

Dolmen

According to the villagers, there are dolmens on the top of the hillock locally called Sanjeevi malai.

The rock shelter with paintings, presence of dolmen, terrace settlement and the grinding grooves suggest that this site might have existed from the time of Neolithic times. However, most of the paintings belong to the Iron Age.

Rock Shelter-V

It is located above the Kuruparayan temple. It has two paintings. One is tortoise like and another is a dead body (Burial ceremony). Both are made of white pigment. The shelter is facing the southern side of the village has a length of 4 m (Figs. 4.46.6-4.46.7).

Description

The rock shelter paintings are done in white pigment. In this panel, paintings are in scattered and groups of peoples are shown. The human figures, animal figures and weapons are drawn. Many of the paintings show in group of people dancing with their child. People are holding weapons and meeting each other, a man with animal drawn inside square box, a man sitting on the animal and holding weapom in his right hand and opposite two humans with one is standing and another one is sitting on the animal and both are the holding weapons and meeting each other, 17 humans and children are holding hands each other and dancing , a cattle at the centre in standing position, and group of people holding weapons and fighting each other and a man riding on the elephant and holding weapons are some paintings executed here and few are faded and not clearly visible.

Panel Description

Shelter I

There are seven human figures in white, made with in-filled pattern and out of seven, four of them are executed in a similar infilled body, thin strokes of legs, hands shown lifted with holding an object in both hands. In between the three consecutive figures, there is a small human figure made of a thin stroke line with extended hands without any object and with a box head. On the extreme top right, there is another human figure of infilled fashion but the lower waist portions are broad in nature. Below, there is another smallest human figure. The paintings are made in a simple thin line fashion with hands drawn longer than the body itself (Figs. 4.46.8a-4.46.8b).

The panel shows that framed rider image made with infilling in white colour. The animal figure is probably a horse. The human head wears head-gear, the left side is not complete. The mid portion of the body shows a little line drawn on either side indicating the breast portion that might be a depiction of mother goddesses. The left side of the frame is shown adjoined to the front portion of the animal figure (Figs. 4.46.9a-4.46.9b).

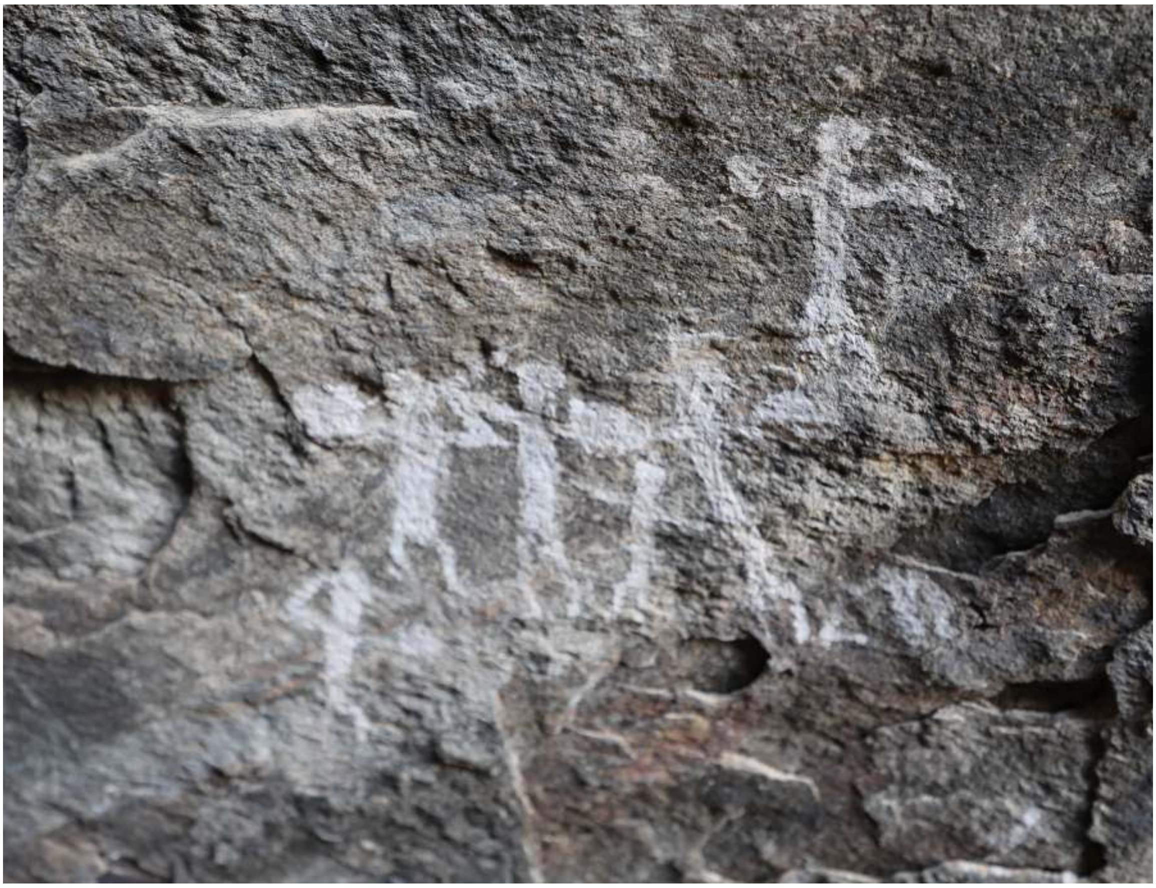


Fig. 4.46.8a Humans

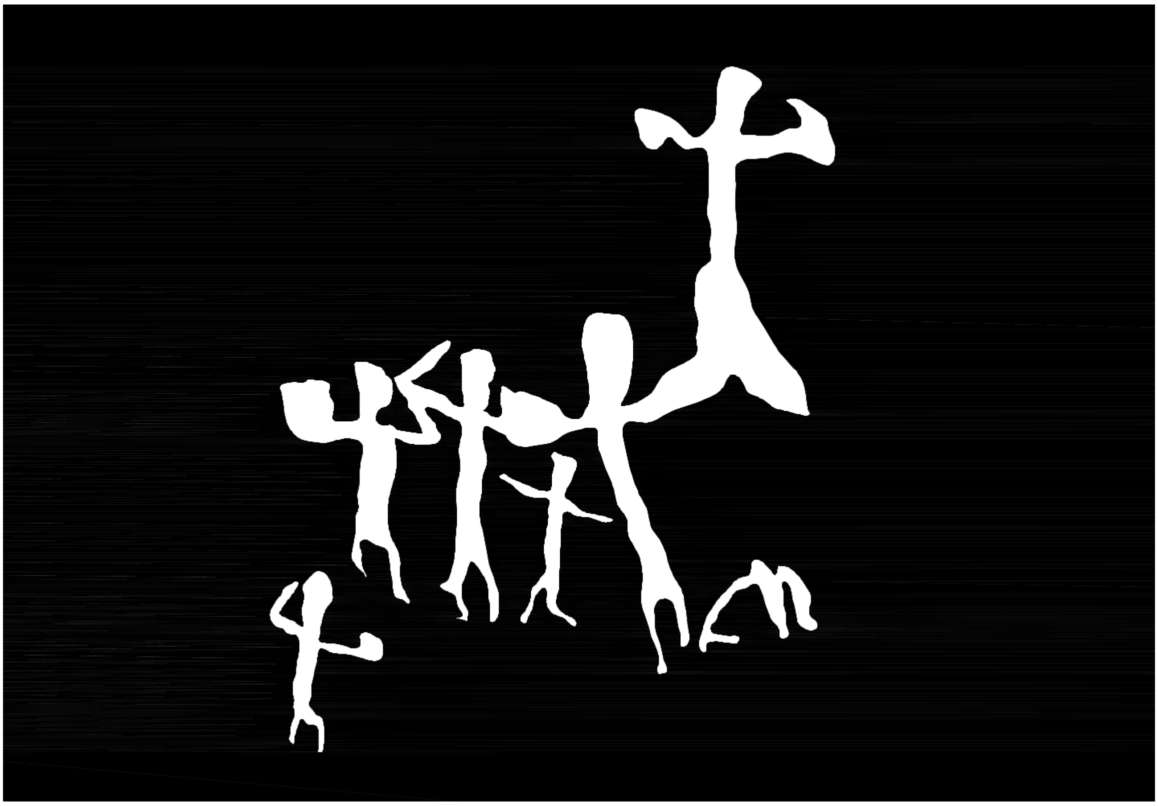


Fig. 4.46.8b Humans

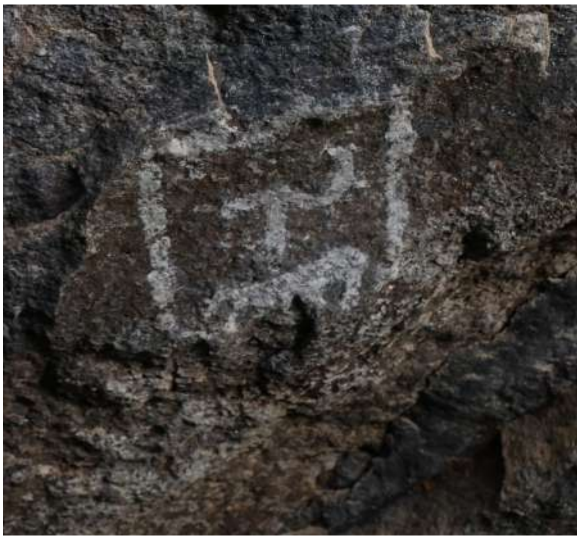


Fig. 4.46.9a Animal rider

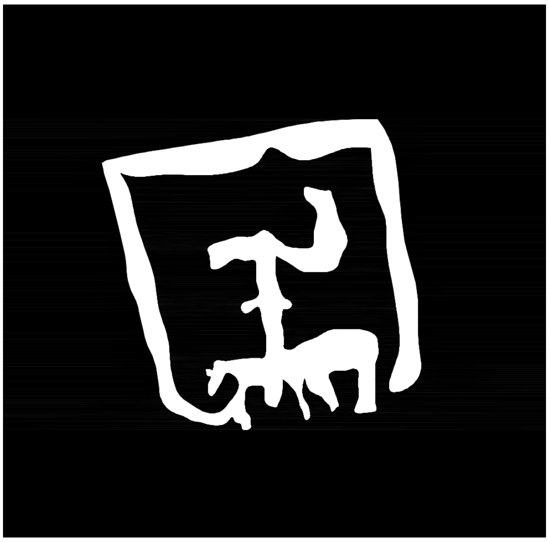


Fig. 4.46.9b Animal rider

This painting is depicting a fighting scene in a moving posture. Three human figures are depicted on the rock surface, of the three humans only two are having an animal and they were sitting on the animal. The first painting is drawn on the left side. Among the two human figures, one is standing and another is mounted on an animal. Both are holding a weapon. The animal has a circular head with a thick line, legs and a short tail and it's filled with white pigment. All are made of white pigment. (Figs. 4.46.10a-4.46.10b).

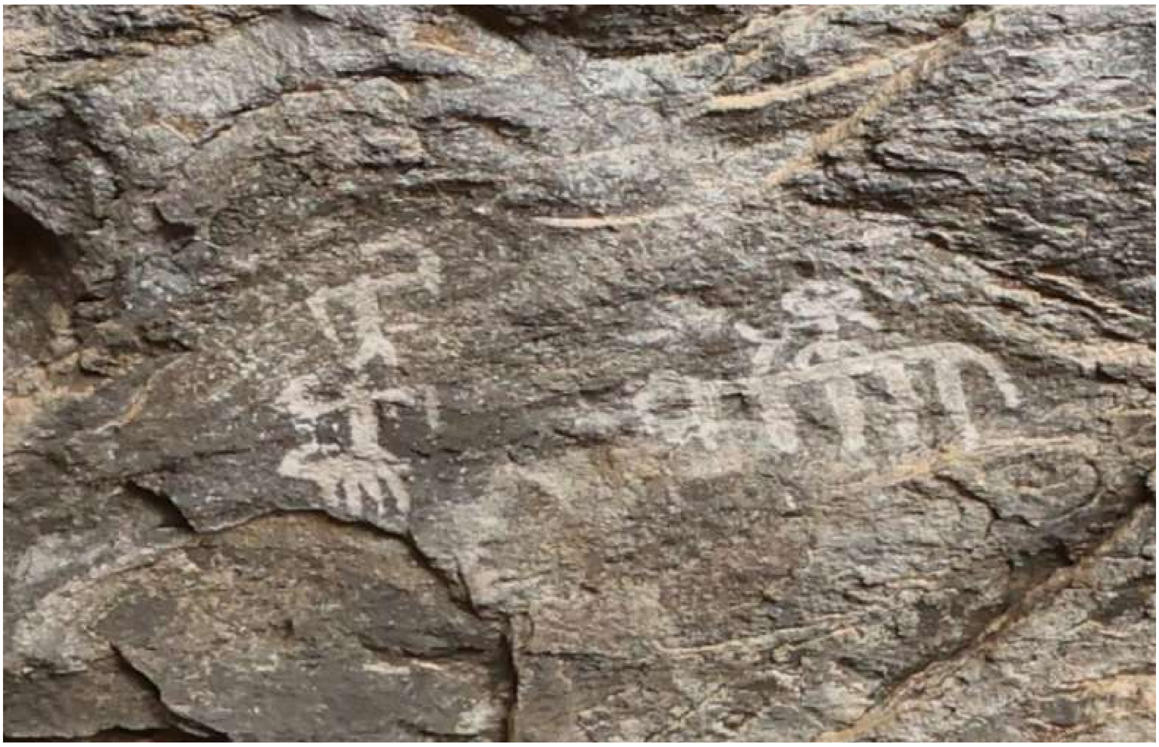


Fig. 4.46.10a Human and animal riders

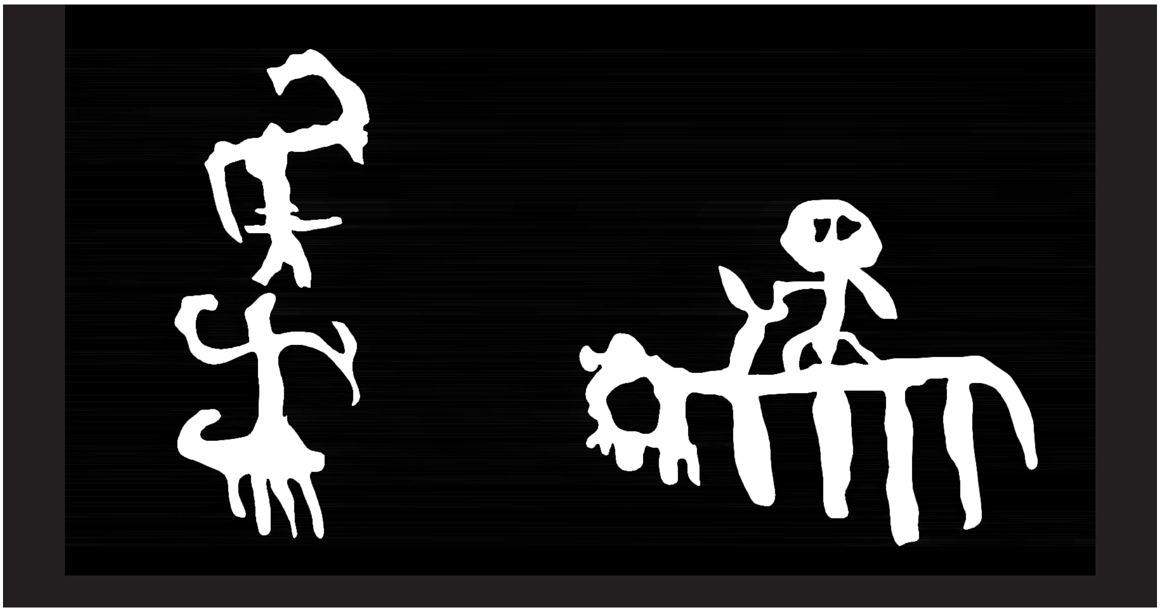


Fig. 4.46.10b Human and animal riders

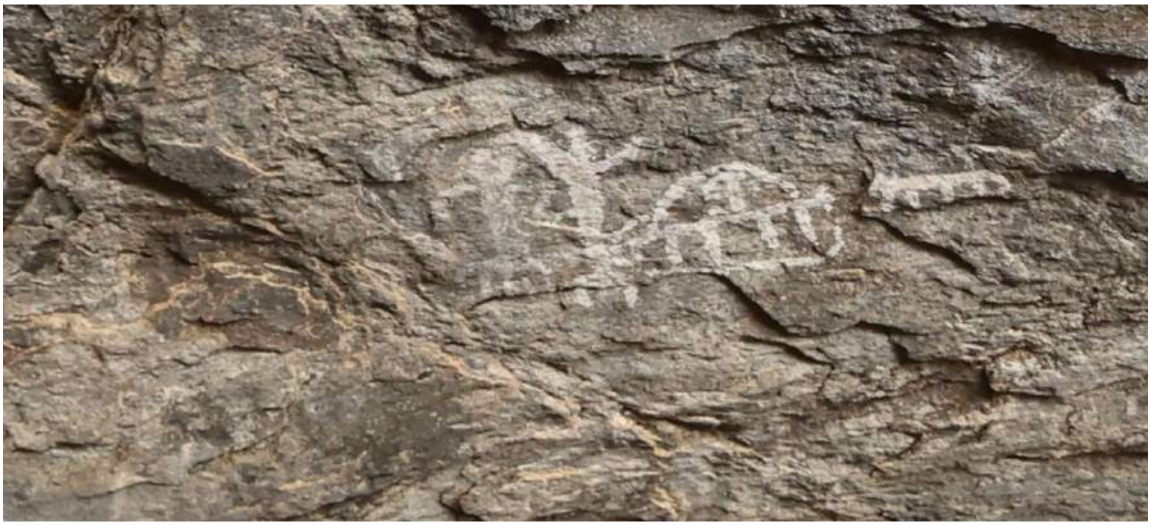


Fig. 4.46.11a Animal and animal riders

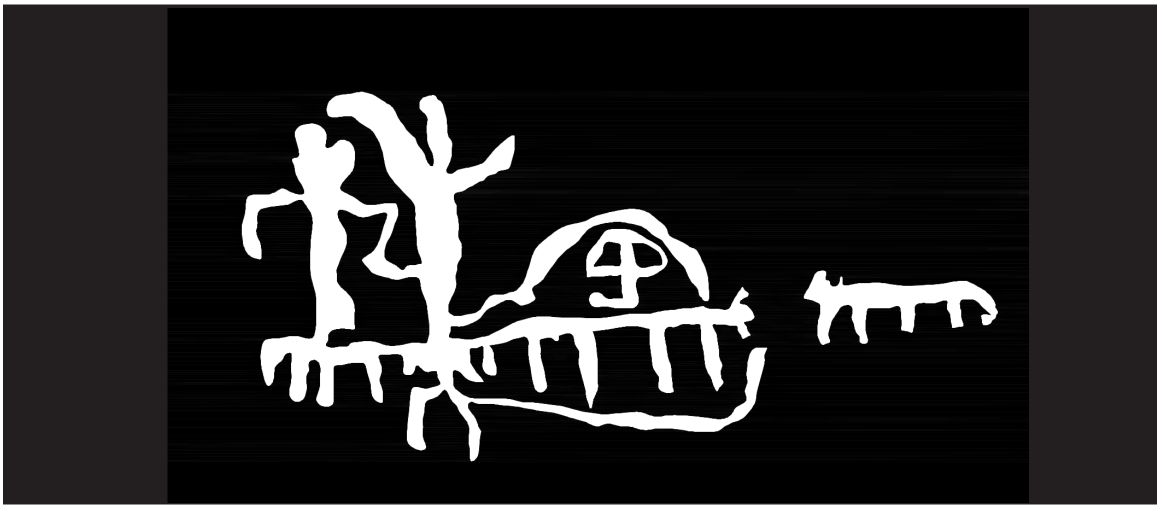


Fig. 4.46.11b Animal and animal riders

This panel of painting is depicting a scene of hunting animals. At the left of the frame there are two human figures raising a chariot. One person is raising a chariot and holding a rope in his left hand. Another one is standing with extended hands. In front of them, one animal is noticed. All are made of white pigment. (Figs. 4.46.11a-4.46.11b).

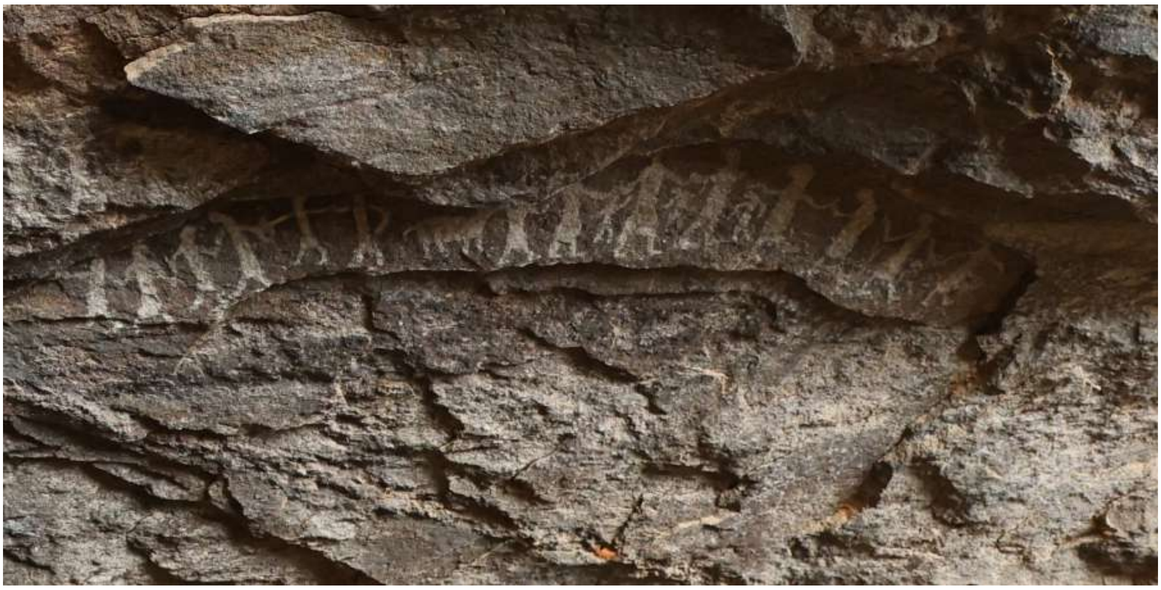


Fig. 4.46.12a Humans and animal

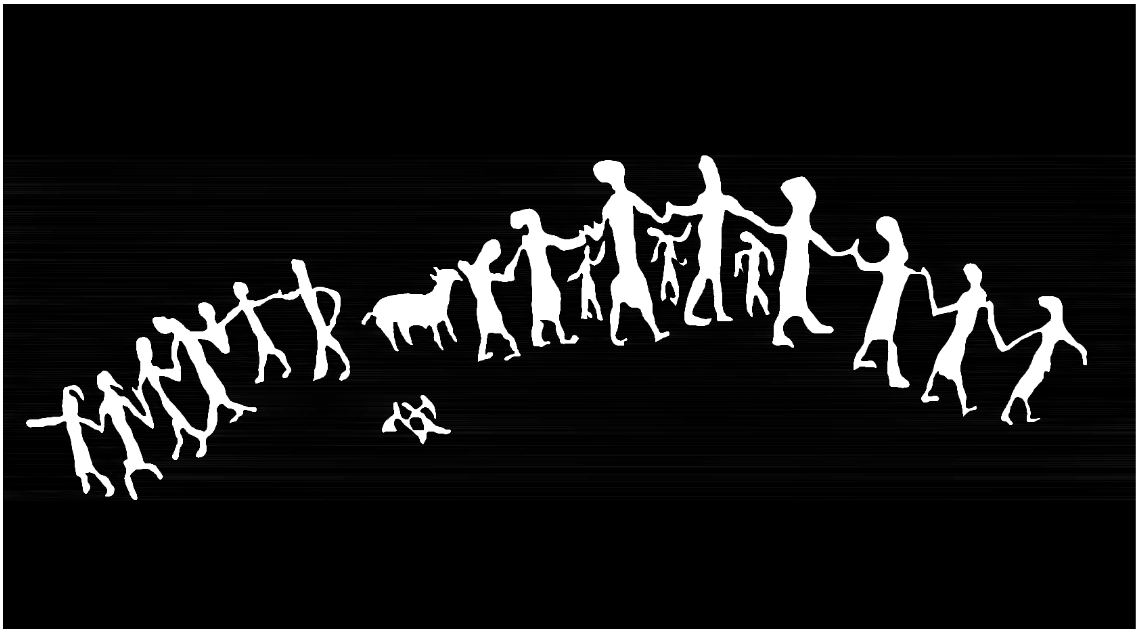


Fig. 4.46.12b Humans and animal

This panel has white paintings. In total, 19 human figures are drawn of males and females along with kids and 2 animals. Two groups of people are dancing by holding their hands and they are facing each other. 7 human figures on the left side are holding their hands along with an animal. At the right side, there is a depiction of 11 human figures with three of whom are dancing. Between of this group, an animal is depicted. This composition is suggestive of a ritual practice with animal sacrifice (Figs. 4.46.12a-4.46.12b).

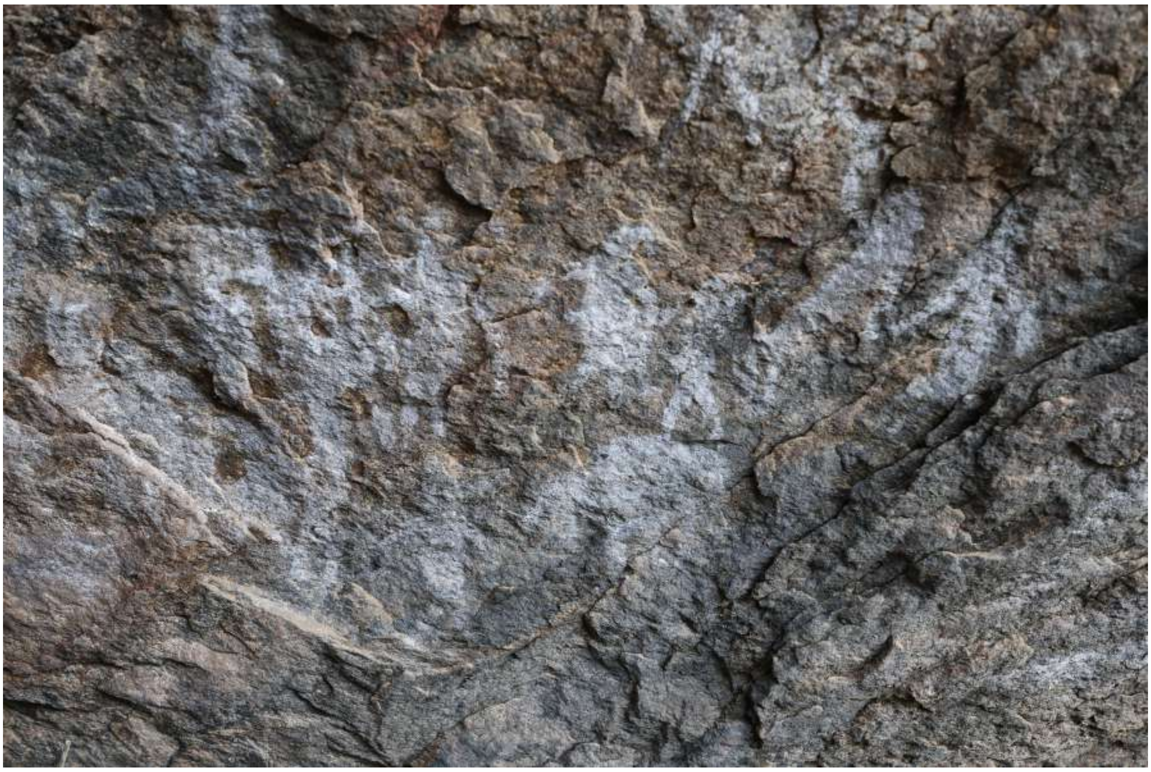


Fig. 4.46.13a Humans

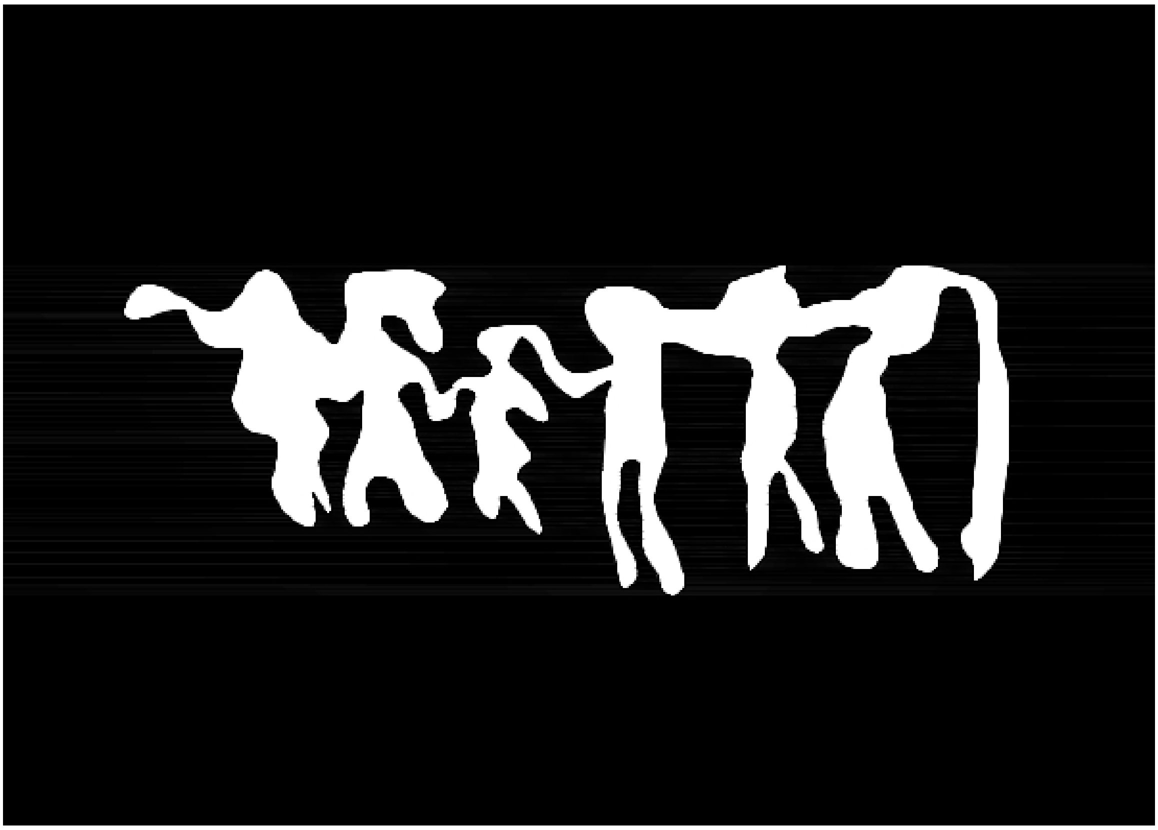


Fig. 4.46.13b Humans

The group of six human figures are depicted standing facing each other. This figure might be a group of female figures, because they are having long hair and a body structure (Figs. 4.46.13a-4.46.13b).

The painting shows a group of three human figures in a walking posture. Two are seen with their hand on each other's shoulders, another is a little away from them (Figs. 4.46.14a-4.46.14b).

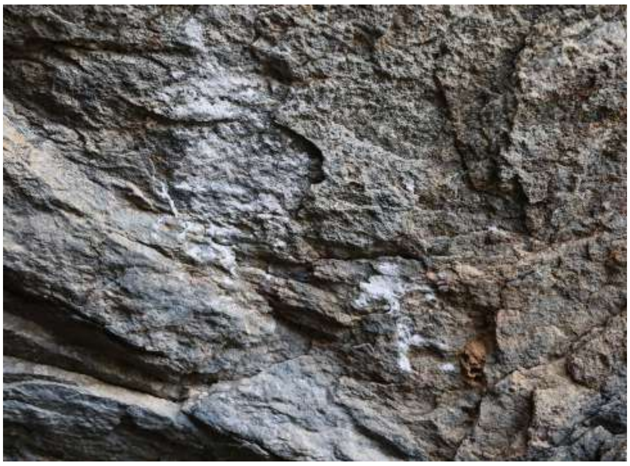


Fig. 4.46.14a Humans

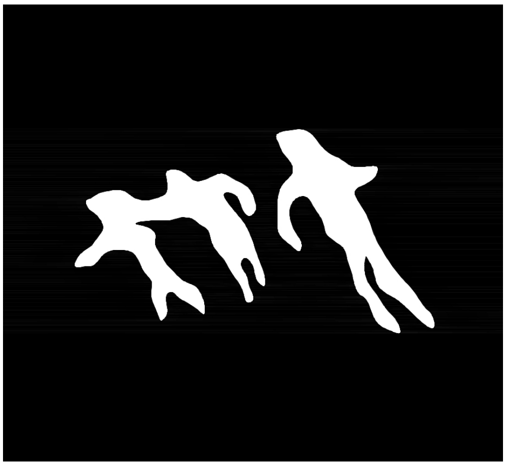


Fig. 4.46.14b Humans

There are several human and animal figures depicted in this panel with a war scene made of white pigment. Human figures are depicted with a long body and upraised hands with weapons in their hands. The second group comprises human figures with extended hands holding weapons. One human is sitting on the animal like an elephant. There are some dots drawn for decorative purposes. Animal riding, human with a long pole and swords have been identified (Figs. 4.46.15a-4.46.15b).

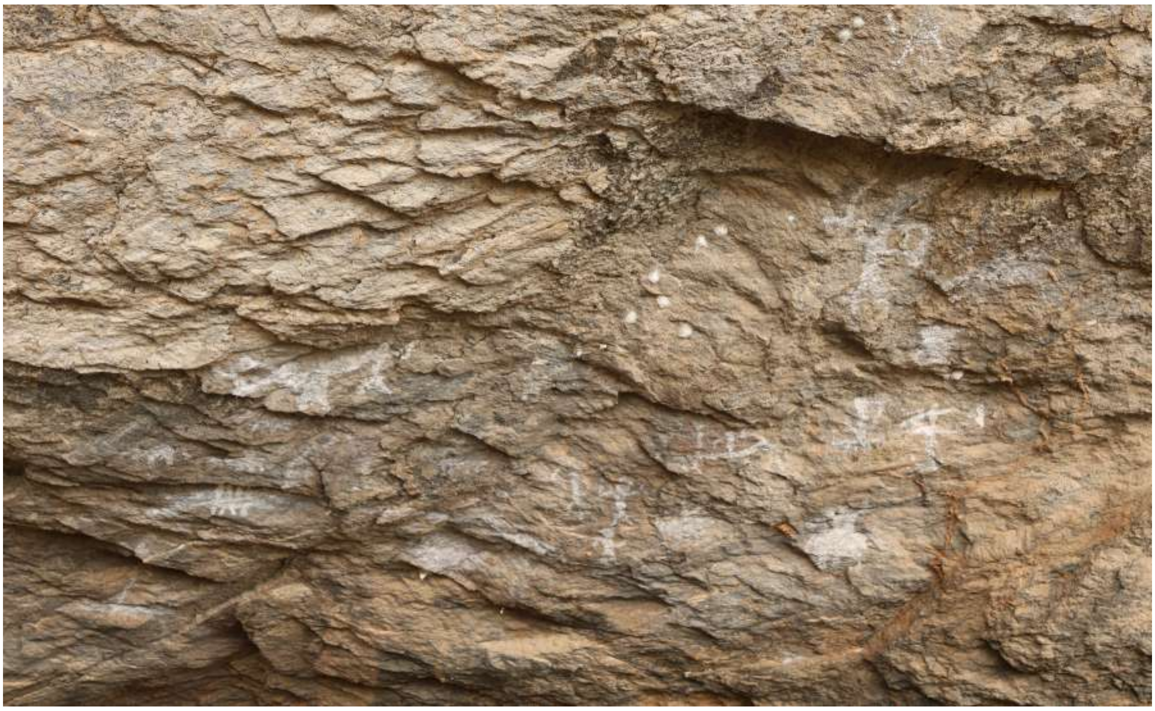


Fig. 4.46.15a Humans, animals and animal riders

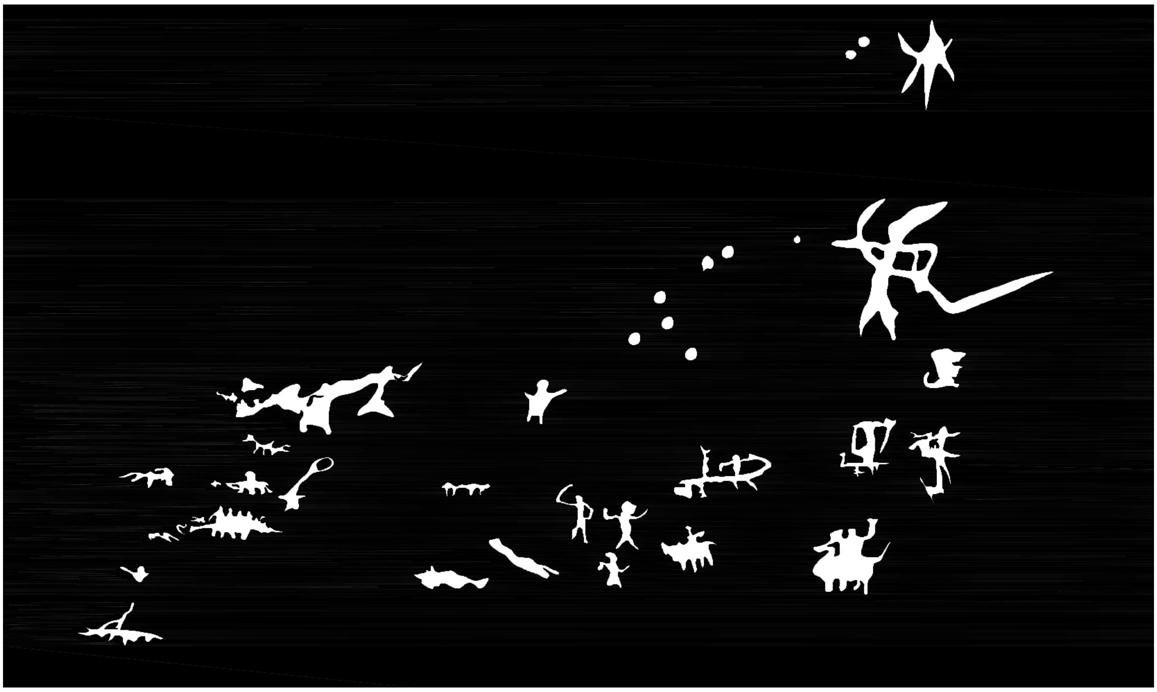


Fig. 4.46.15b Humans, animals and animal riders

Three groups of animal figures in white are seen in the panel. On the left side, four animals with two animals in the centre are depicted. A single animal figure with a big fatty body, short legs and tail is also drawn. (Figs. 4.46.16a-4.46.16b).

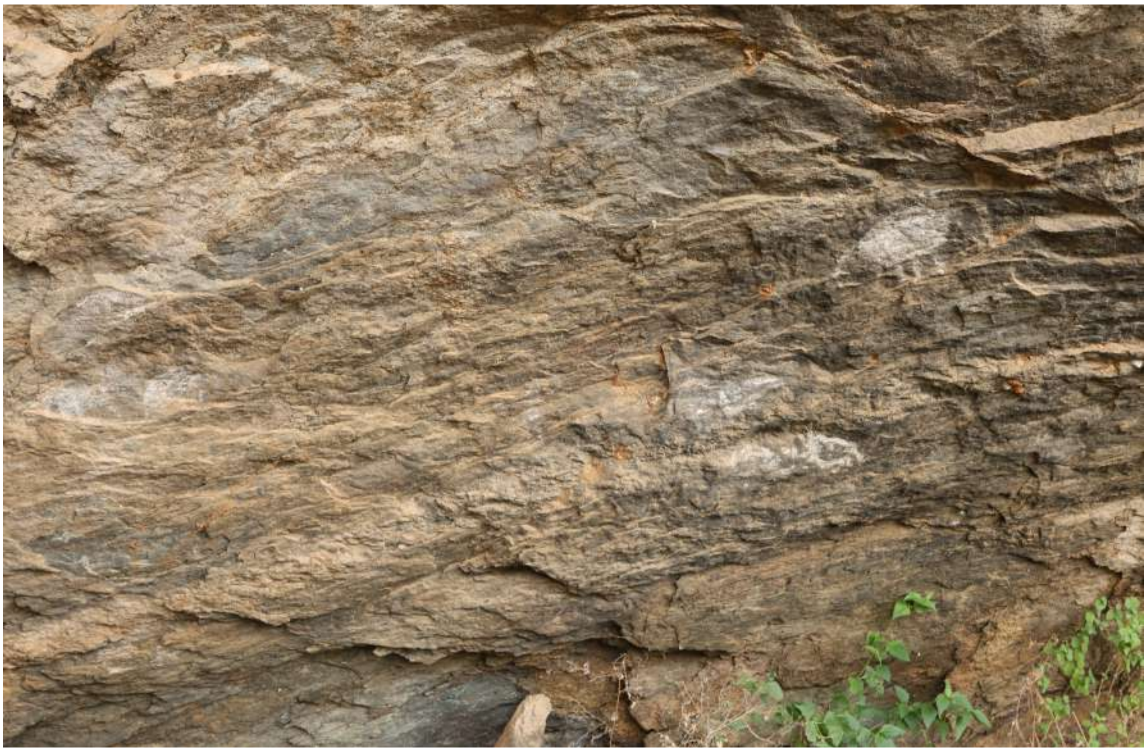


Fig. 4.46.16a Animals

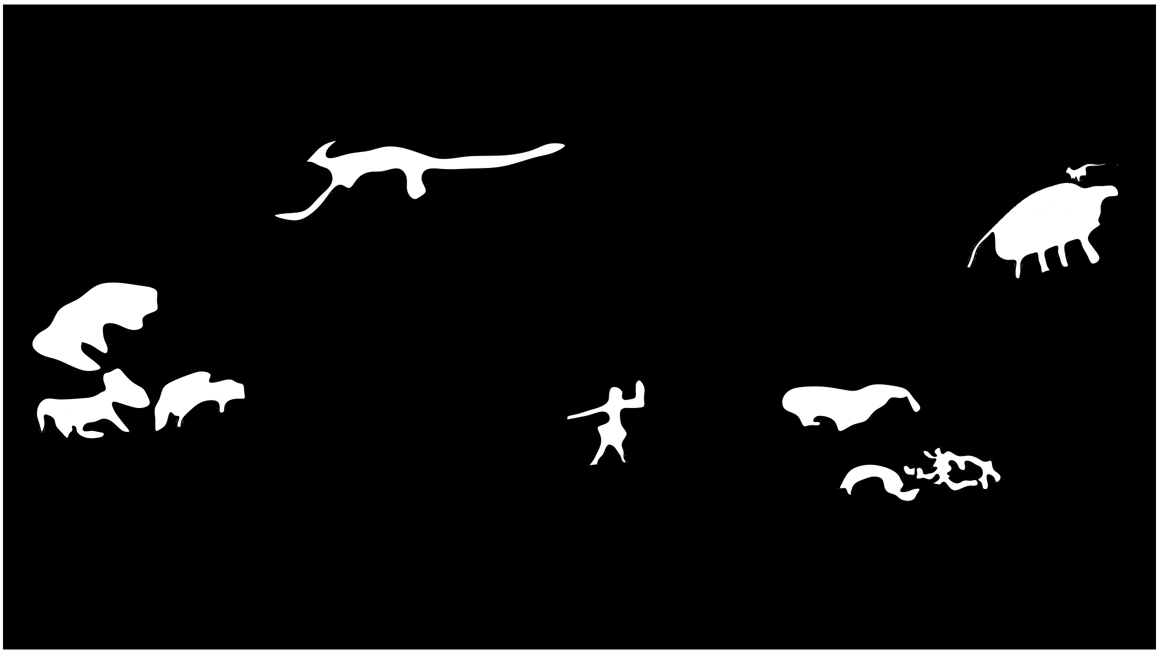


Fig. 4.46.16b Animals

The panel shows several humans riding on animals, with longh bodie and upraised hands holding weapons. The second group depicts a group of five human figures with extended hands and holding weapons. It perhaps represents a fighting scene (Figs. 4.46.17a-4.46.17b). And all the imageries are in white.

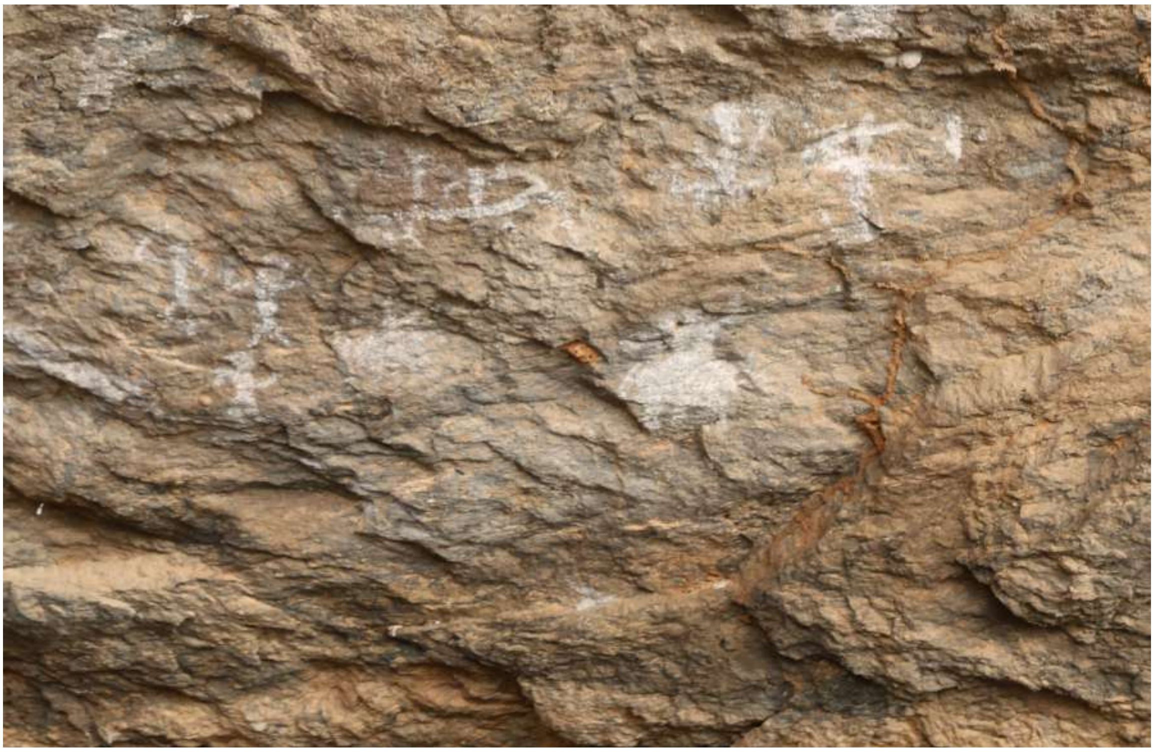


Fig. 4.46.17a Humans and animal rider

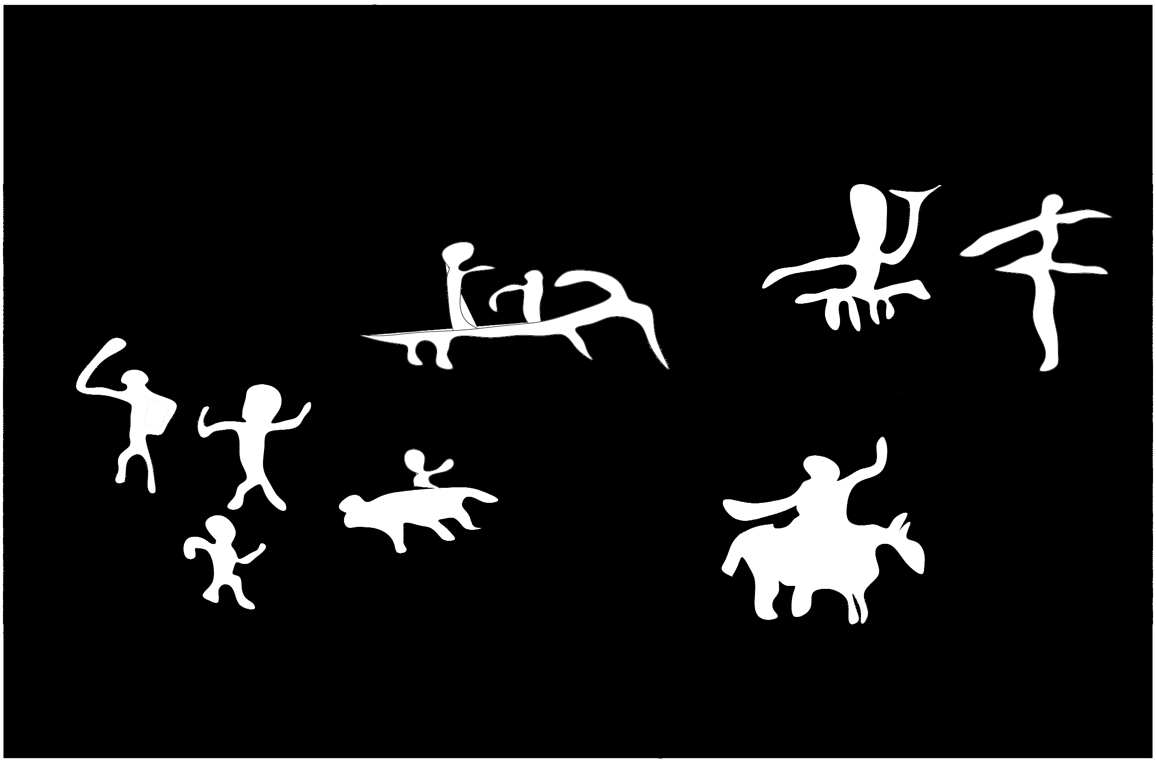


Fig. 4.46.17b Humans and animal rider

In this panel, there are several big and small human figures made in white with an in-filled body and a linear pattern is noticed in the legs and hands. The left larger human figure is shown standing akimbo. The right portion of another human figure is facing right and is holding an object in the right hand and raising a weapon in the left hand. Further right portion, one bigger human figure of similar nature with right hand raised upwards and the left hand kept free are shown. Below these, two small human figures holding an object in the right hand and weapon raised on the left hand are depicted (Figs. 4.46.18a-4.46.18b).

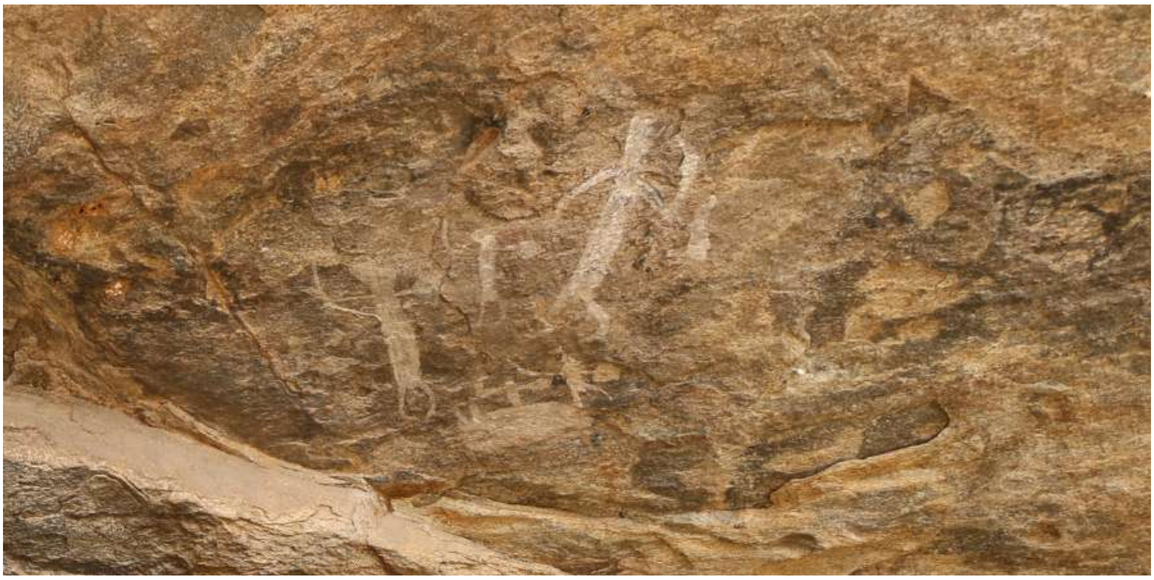


Fig. 4.46.18a Humans

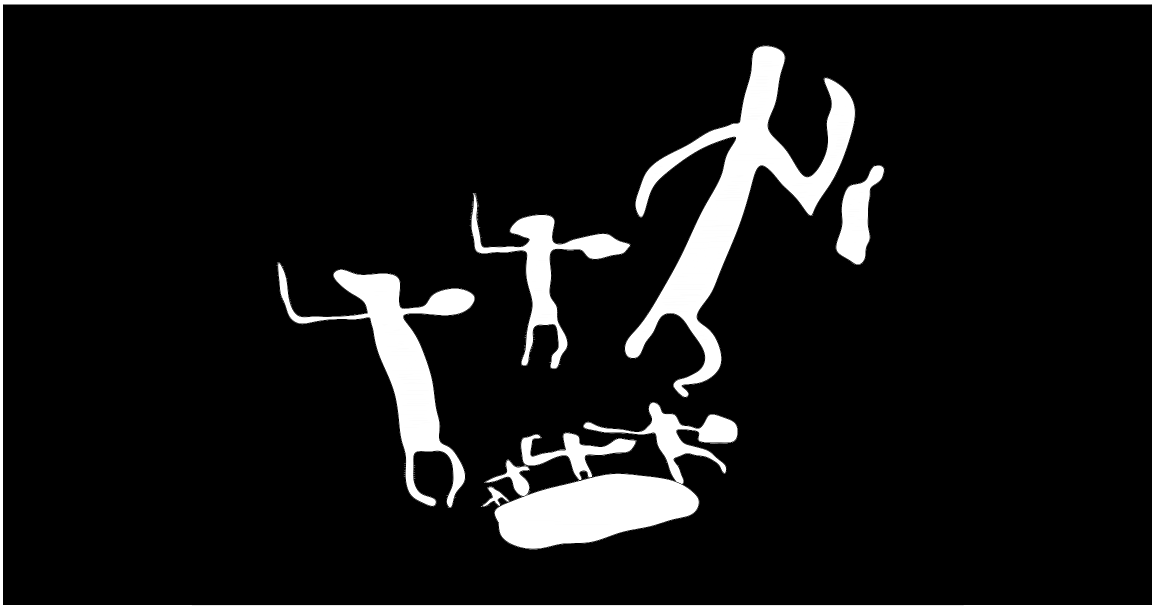


Fig. 4.46.18b Humans

Shelter II

There are several human and animal figures depicted in the rock panel drawn with white pigment. A group of people are involved in a fight. The human figures are sitting on the animal holding weapons like a bow and arrow, a sword and a spear. Some humans are with a long spear and sword. Many animals are in a fallen state, and might be dead. Around the war scene, finger dots were painted probably representing a mountain (Figs. 4.46.19a-4.46.19b).

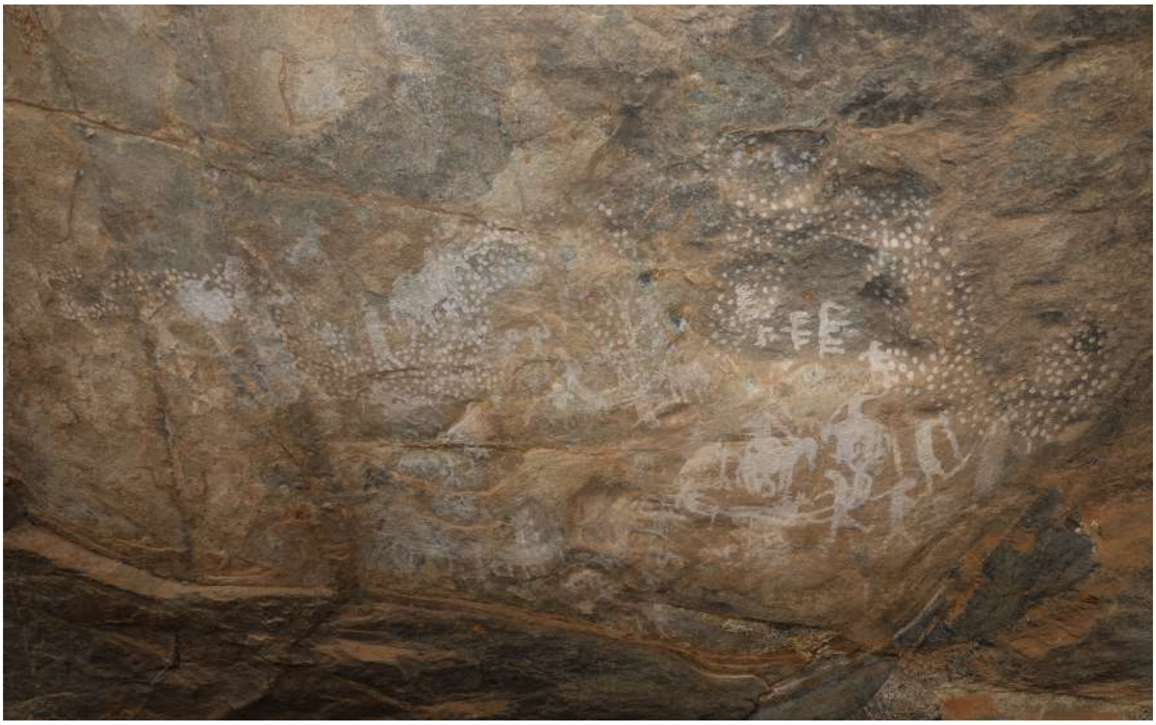


Fig. 4.46.19a Human, Animal, animal rider and finger dots.

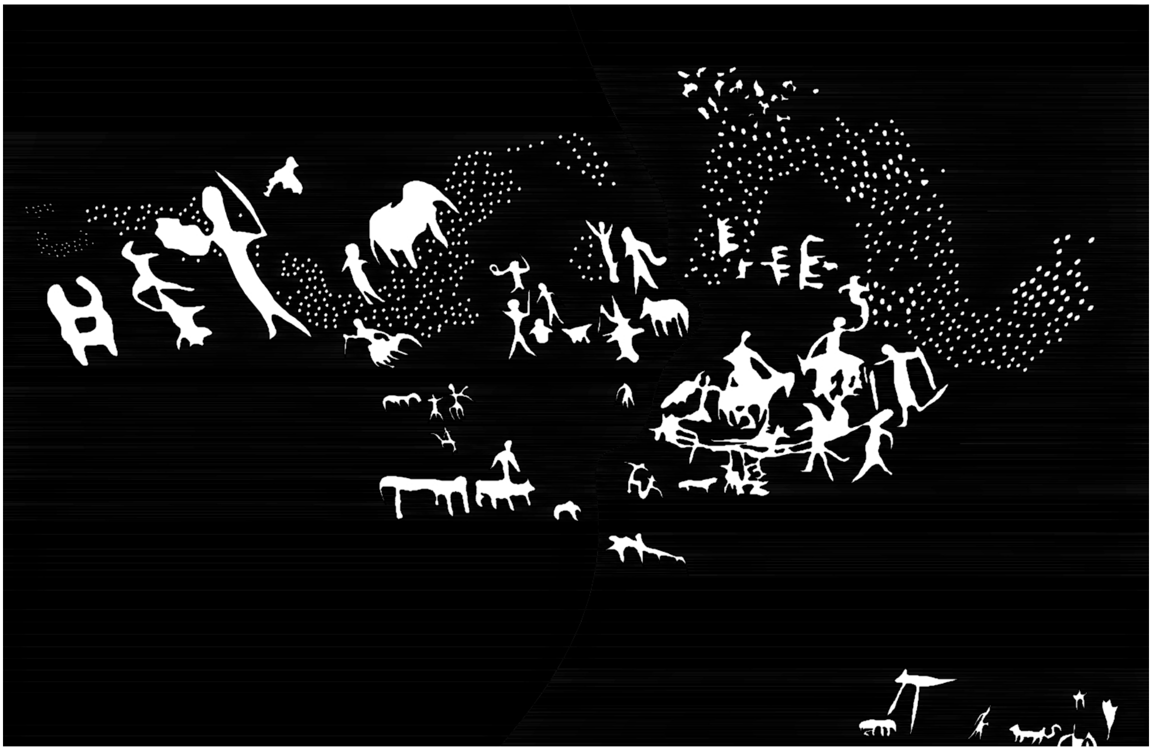


Fig. 4.46.19b Human, Animal, animal rider and finger dots.

In this painting, an elephant is climbing a mountain with the rider. The paintings are made of white pigment. The rider is facing right and the human figure is shown with raised left hand and right hand holding the back of the animal. The animal front portion is faded (Figs. 4.46.20a-4.46.20b).

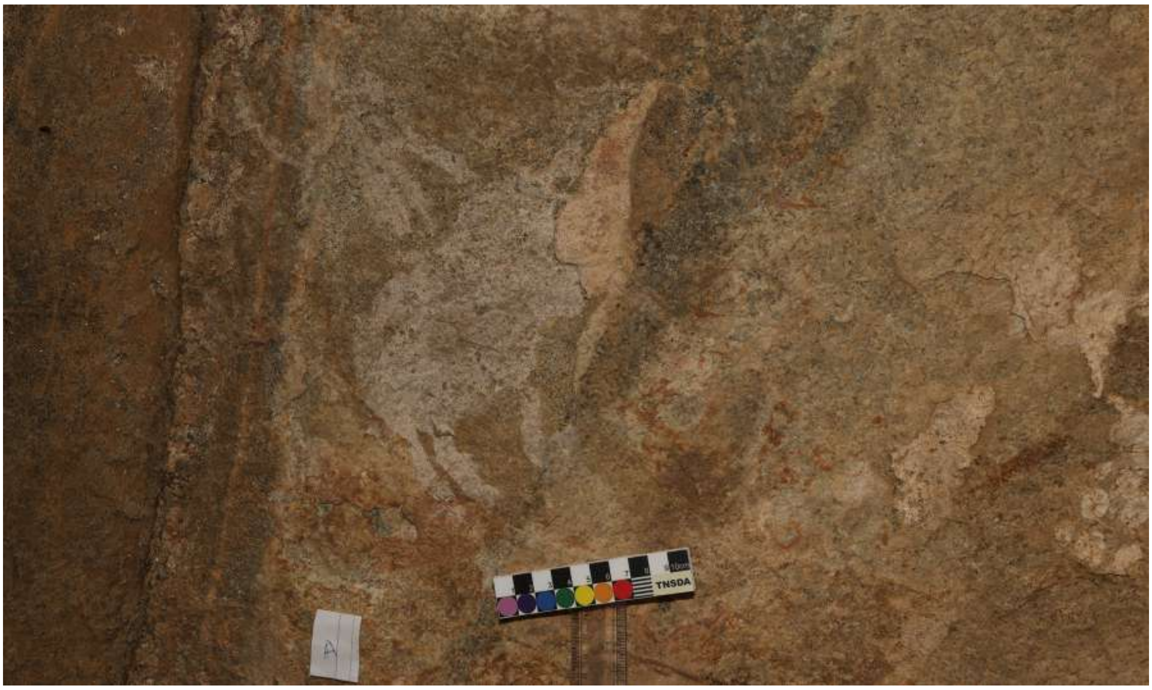


Fig. 4.46.20a Animal rider

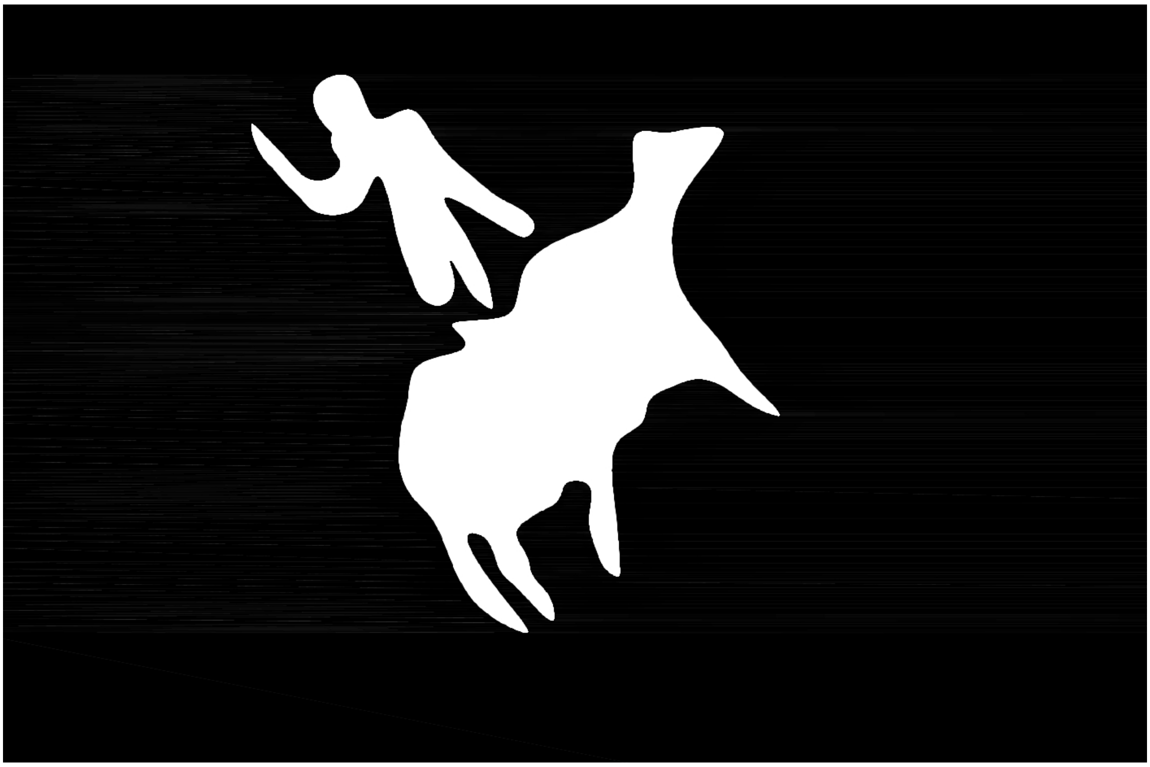


Fig. 4.46.20b Animal rider

The next panel shows an elephant painted in white and black outline. The head and tusk portions are slightly damaged and faded, but the body and leg portions are very clear (Figs. 4.46.21a-4.46.21b).

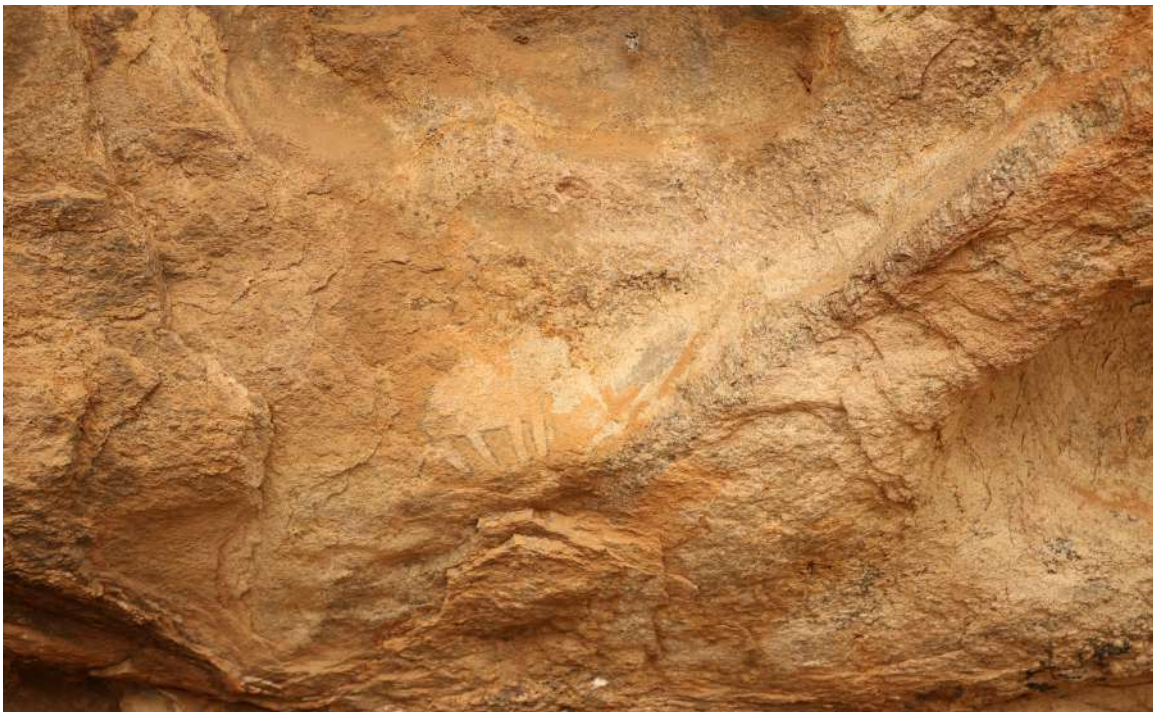


Fig. 4.46.21a Elephant

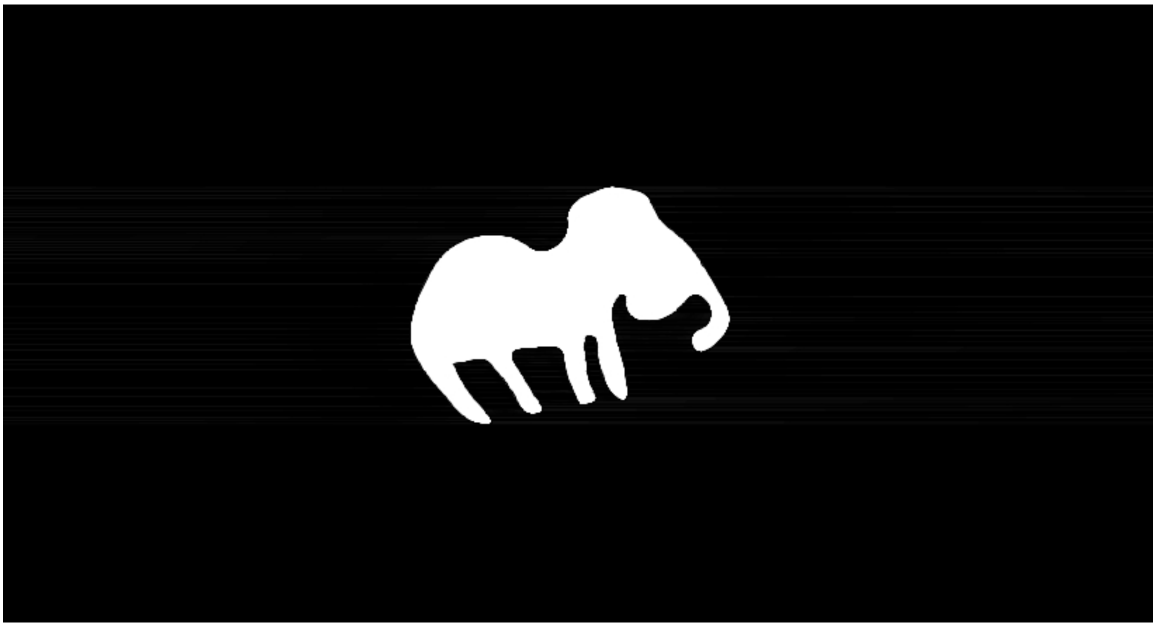


Fig. 4.46.21b Elephant

Shelter III

This panel is depicts a fighting scene between two groups, all are made of white pigment. Four human figures are mounted on animals facing each other and holding weapons (Figs. 4.46.22a-4.46.22b).

Fig. 4.46.22a Animal and human

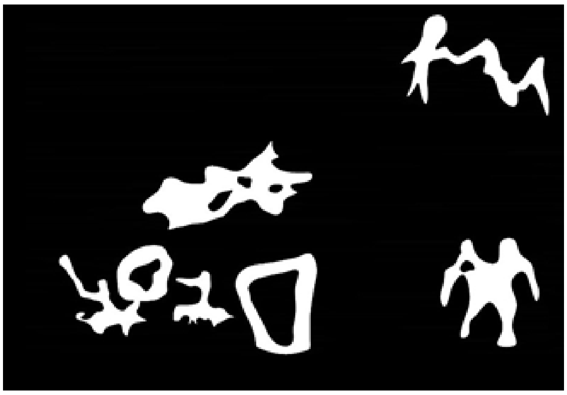


Fig. 4.46.22b Animal and human

The shelter is having two groups of human figures in two layers. In the top layer, three human figures with extended hands with a long body are seen. The bottom layer has three human figures with upraised hands and extended hands with weapons like a sword, all are made of white pigment (Figs. 4.46.23a-4.46.23b).

The paintings show a kind of reptile variety drawn with a thick lengthy body along with multiple legs and both sides are made of white pigment. (Figs. 4.46.24a-4.46.24b).

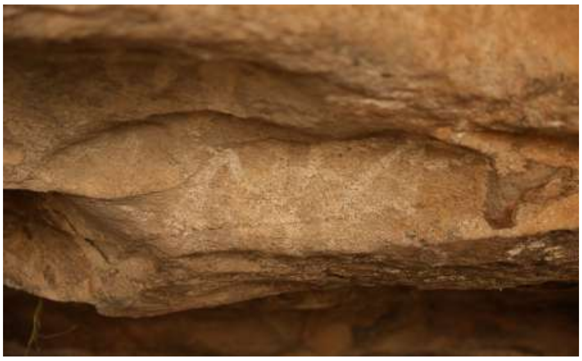


Fig. 4.46.23a Humans

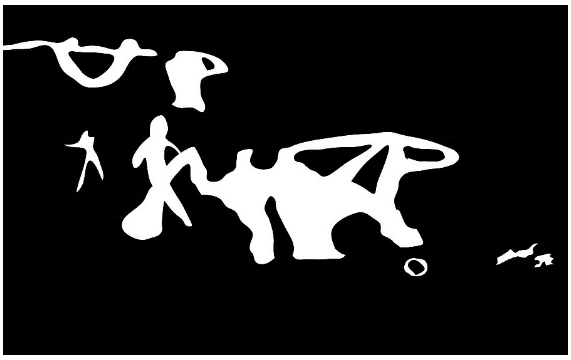


Fig. 4.46.23b Humans

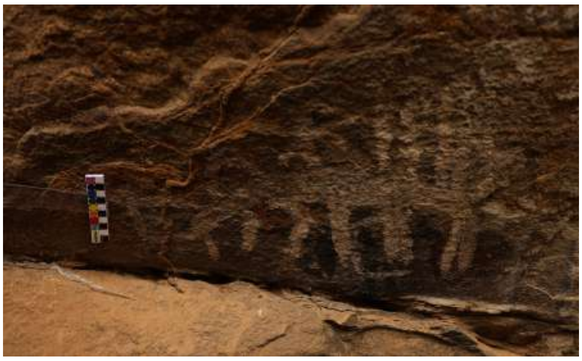


Fig. 4.46.24a Animal

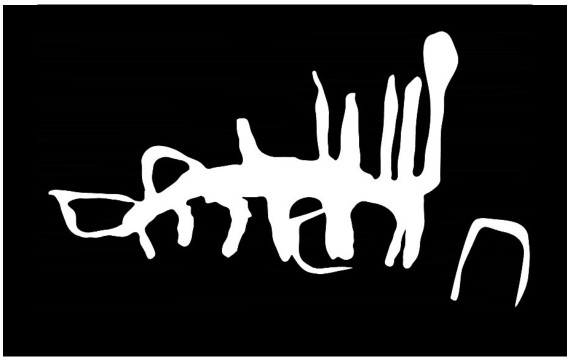


Fig. 4.46.24b Animal

The panel is having a white figure that looks like an ithyphallic animal but could not be identified as it is in a faded condition (Figs. 4.46.25a-4.46.25b).

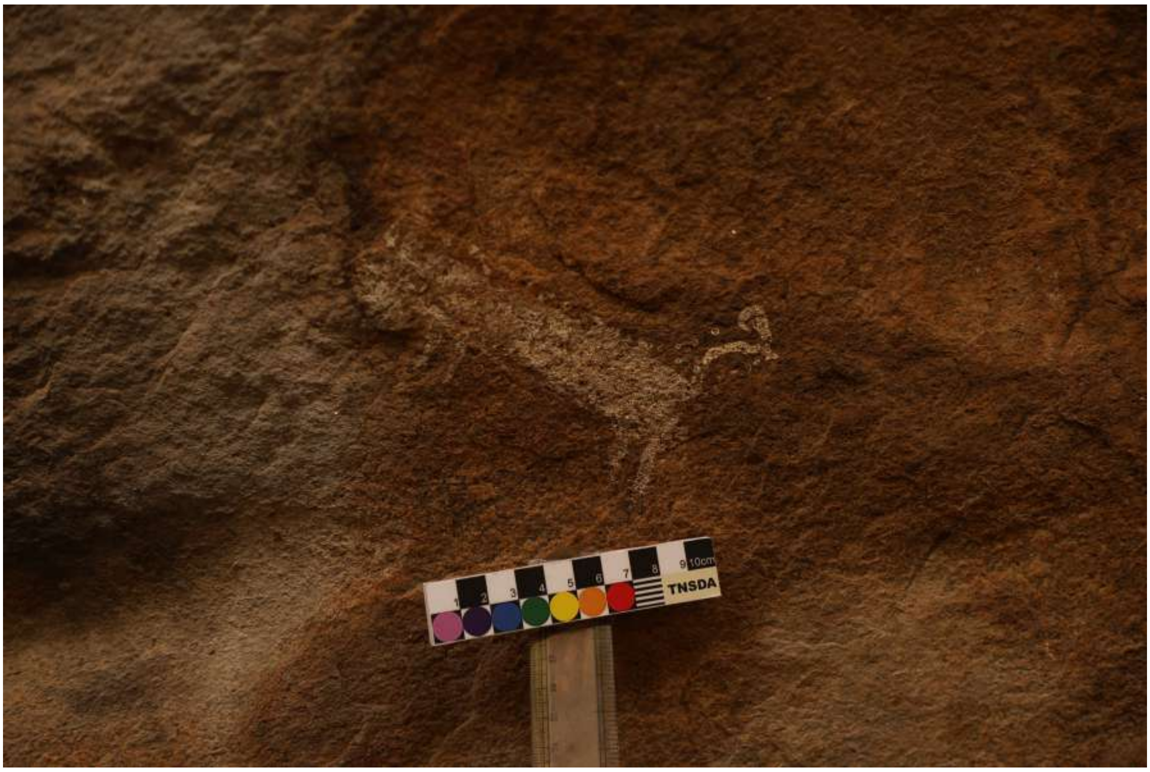


Fig. 4.46.25a Animal

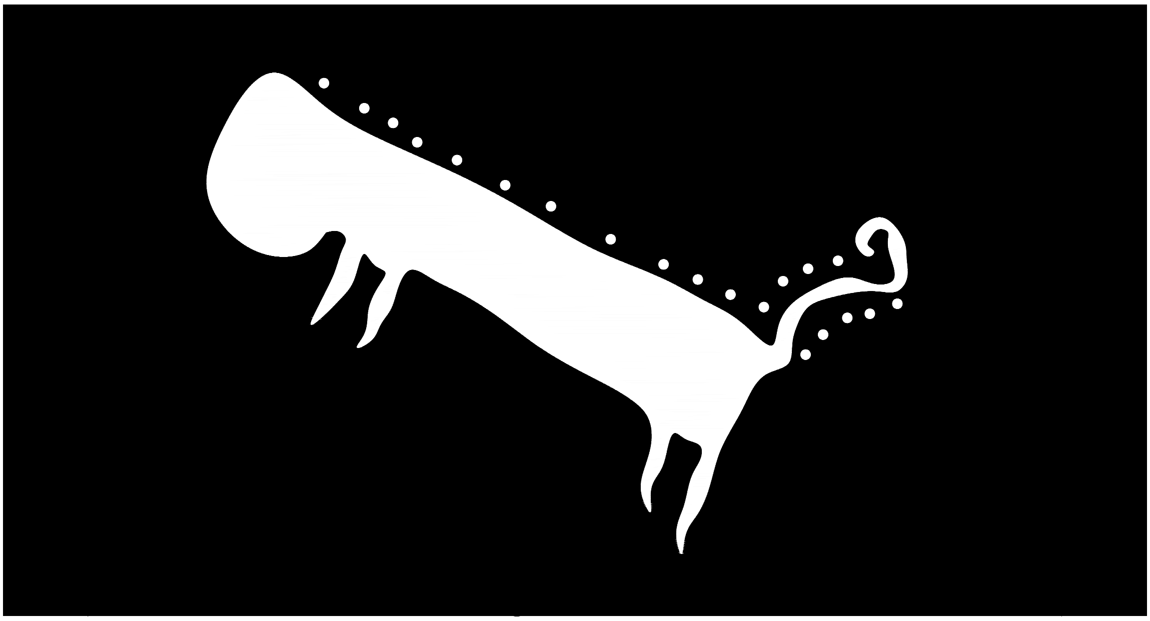


Fig. 4.46.25b Animal

The next painting shows that one human figure is depicted in a standing posture with the right hand folded and kept on the waist and the left hand is probably holding a weapon. Painted with white pigment (Figs. 4.46.26a-4.46.26b).

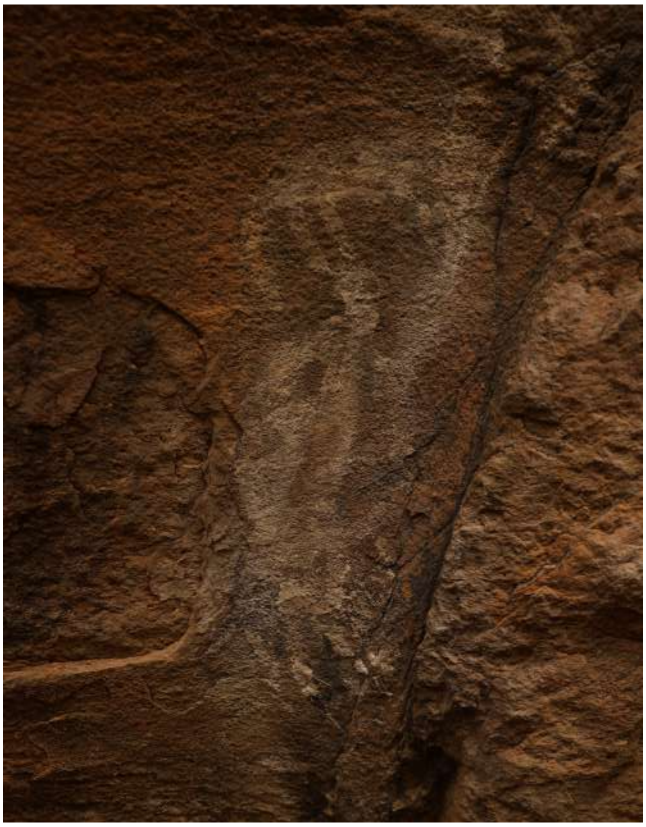


Fig. 4.46.26a Animal and human

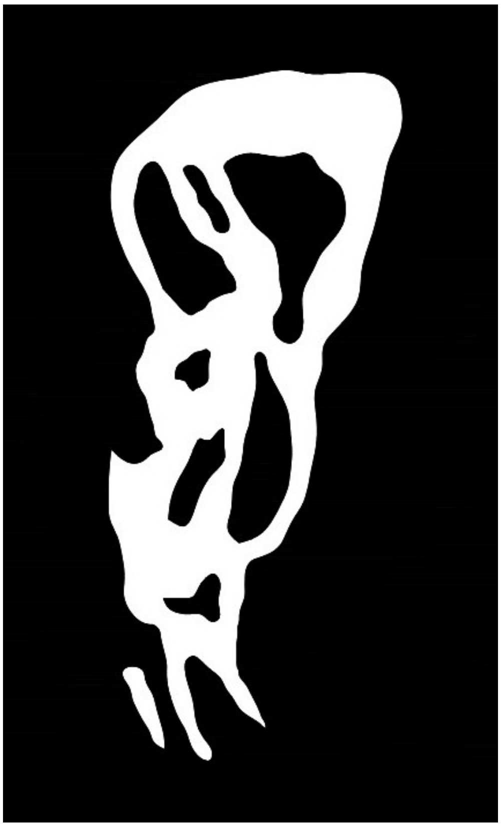


Fig. 4.46.26b Animal and human

The shelter has two human figures. One human figure is sitting on a moving animal with hands holding a rope. Another human figure is shown in walking position with upraised hands, drawn with white pigment (Figs. 4.46.27a-4.46.27b).

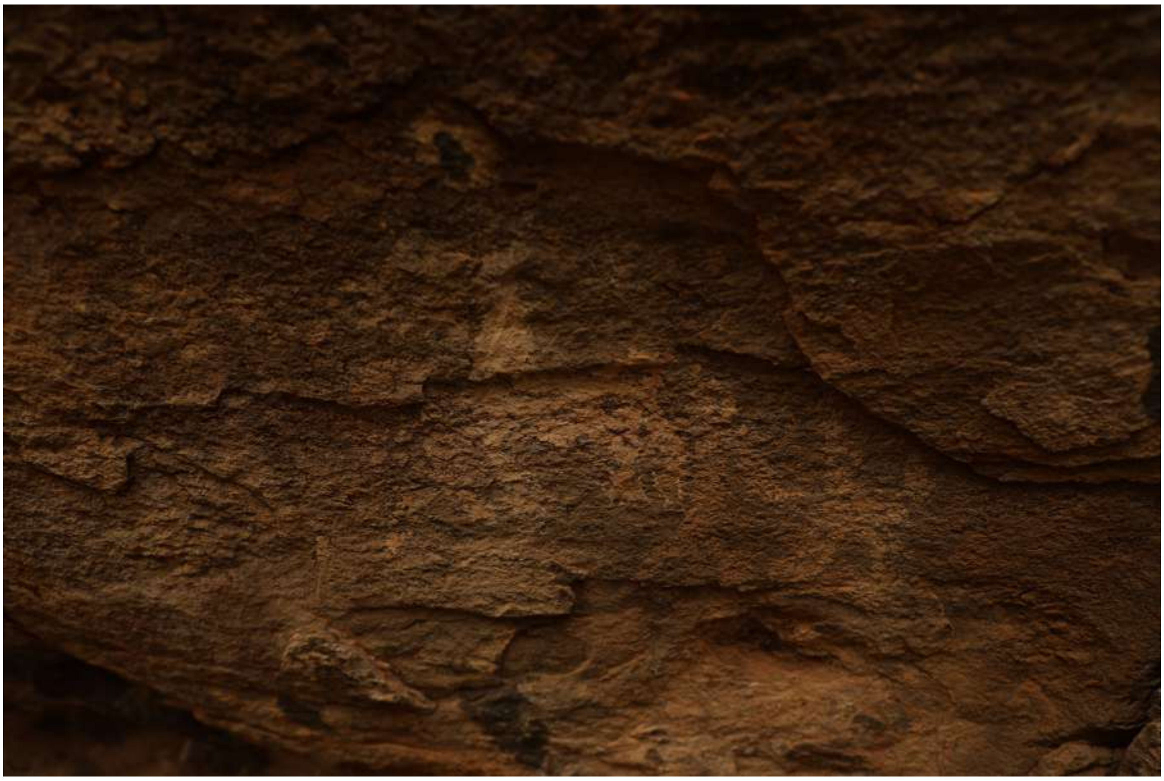


Fig. 4.46.27a Animal rider

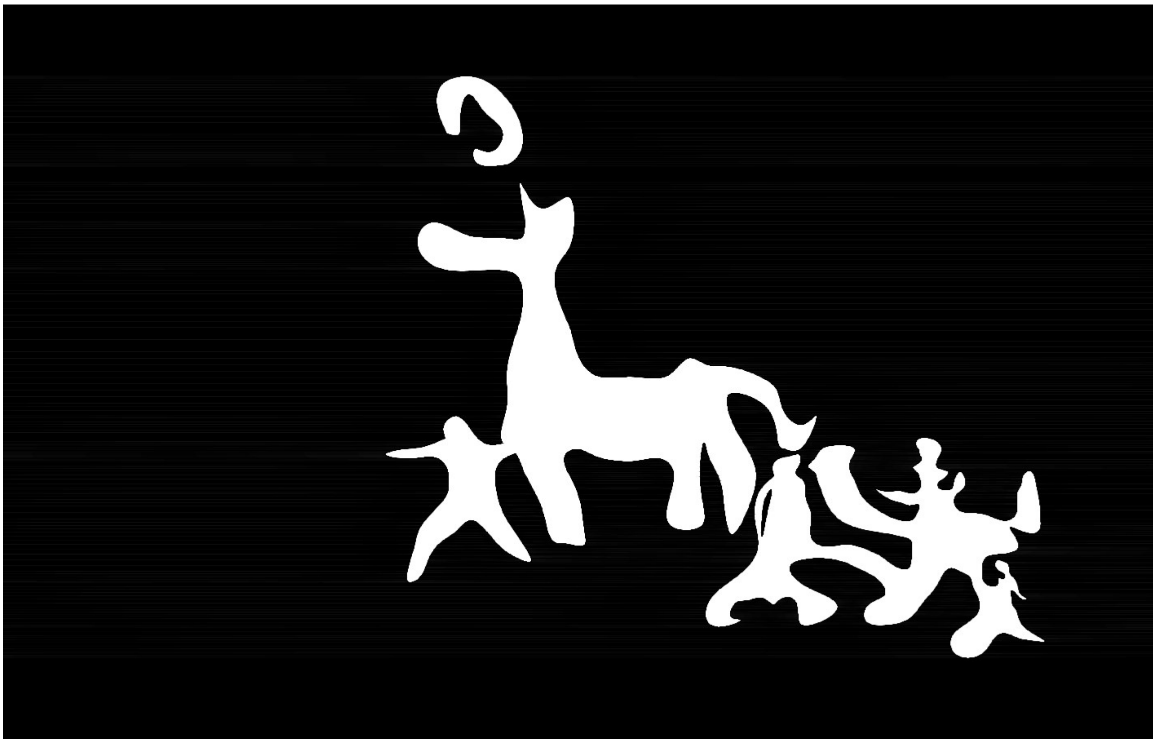


Fig. 4.46.27b Animal rider

This group has white paintings. All the humans are sitting on animals. One human figure is bigger in size, he must be the head of this group. Three humans are depicted with folded hands and holding weapons in their hands. (Figs. 4.46.28a-4.46.28b).

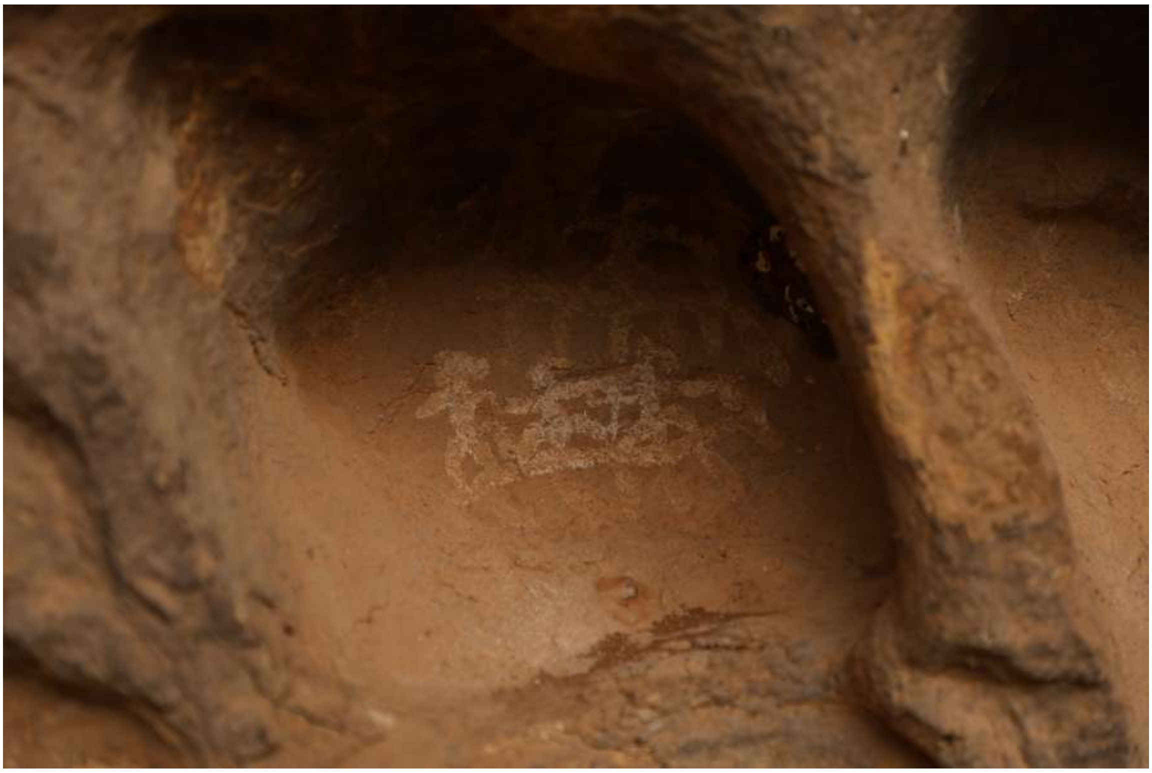


Fig. 4.46.28a Humans and animal rider

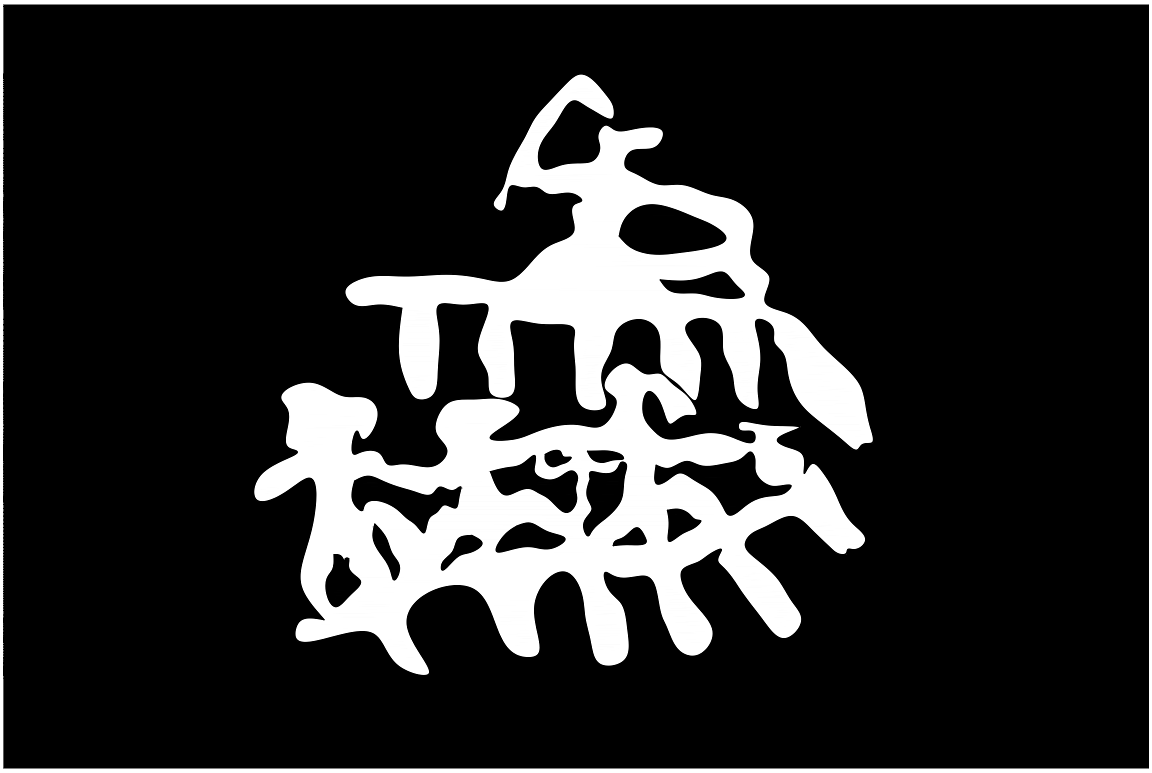


Fig. 4.46.28b Humans and animal rider

This panel has three human figures and is depicted in a larger size drawn with white pigment. They have a round head, short neck, thick stroke lined of body and hands are kept on the waist (Figs. 4.46.29a-4.46.29b).

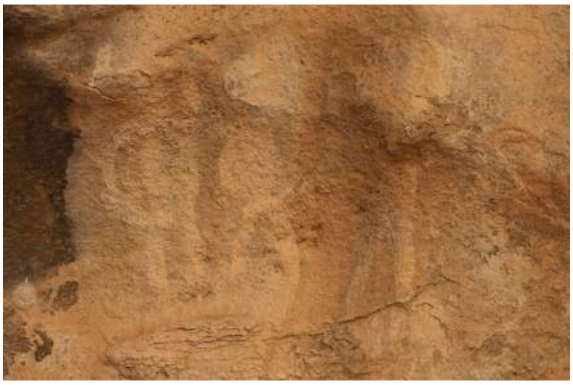


Fig. 4.46.29a Humans

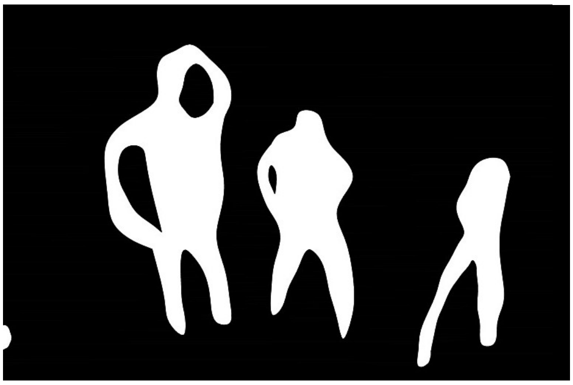


Fig. 4.46.29b Humans

The next panel has a dancing scene with two human figures drawn with white pigment. The left figure is facing another by holding the waist and the right figure's head is turned facing the person and hands are extended and legs are in a folding position (Figs. 4.46.30a-4.46.30b).

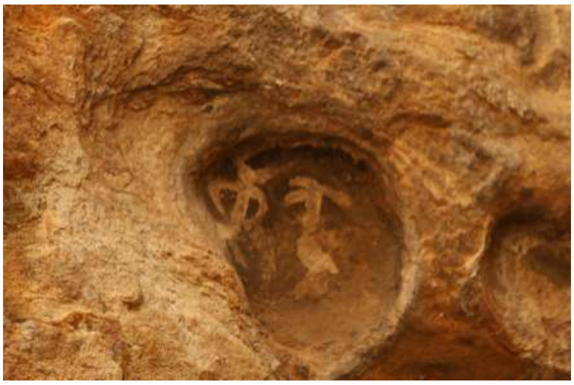


Fig. 4.46.30a Humans

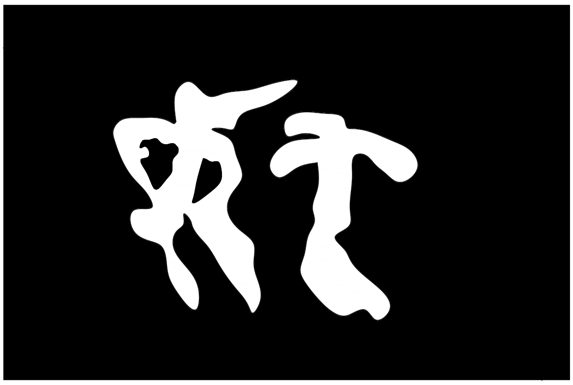


Fig. 4.46.30b Humans

This panel depicts a fighting scene between two groups. The left group of human figures are depicted sitting on an animal and another is in walking along. All the human figures are holding a weapon. The right-side group is also with humans and animals. They are running in opposite directions and all are made of white pigment (Figs. 4.46.31a-4.46.31b).

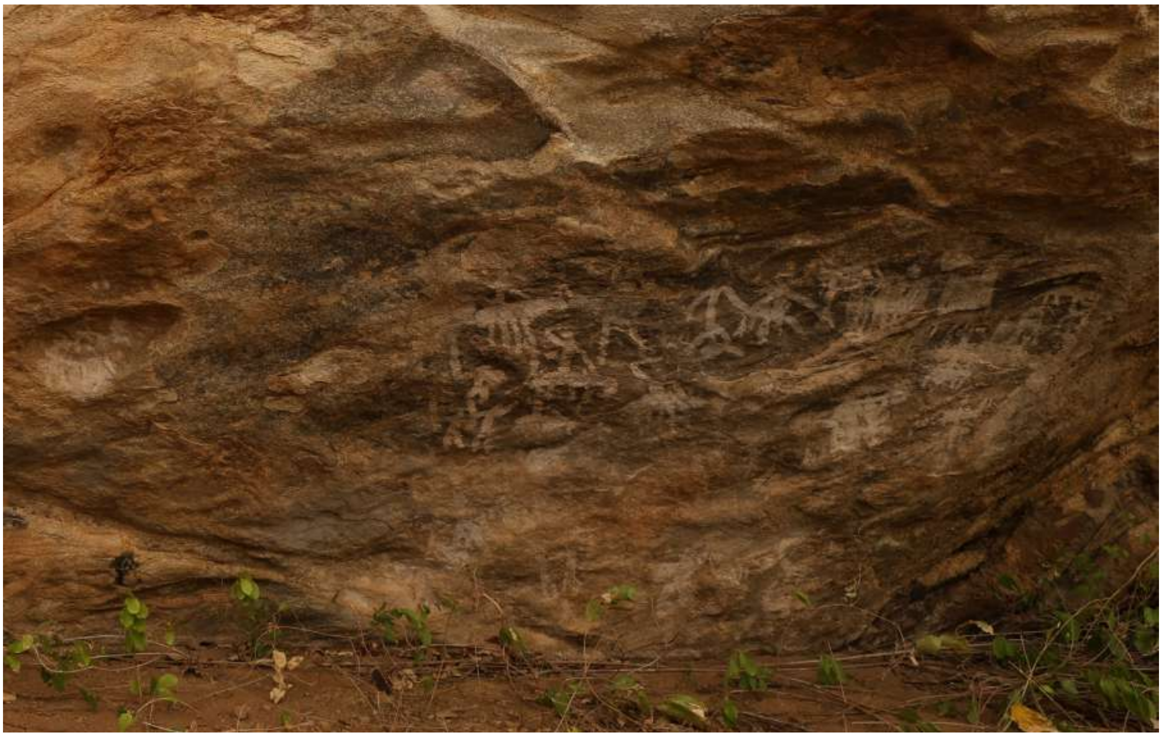


Fig. 4.46.31a Humans and animal riders

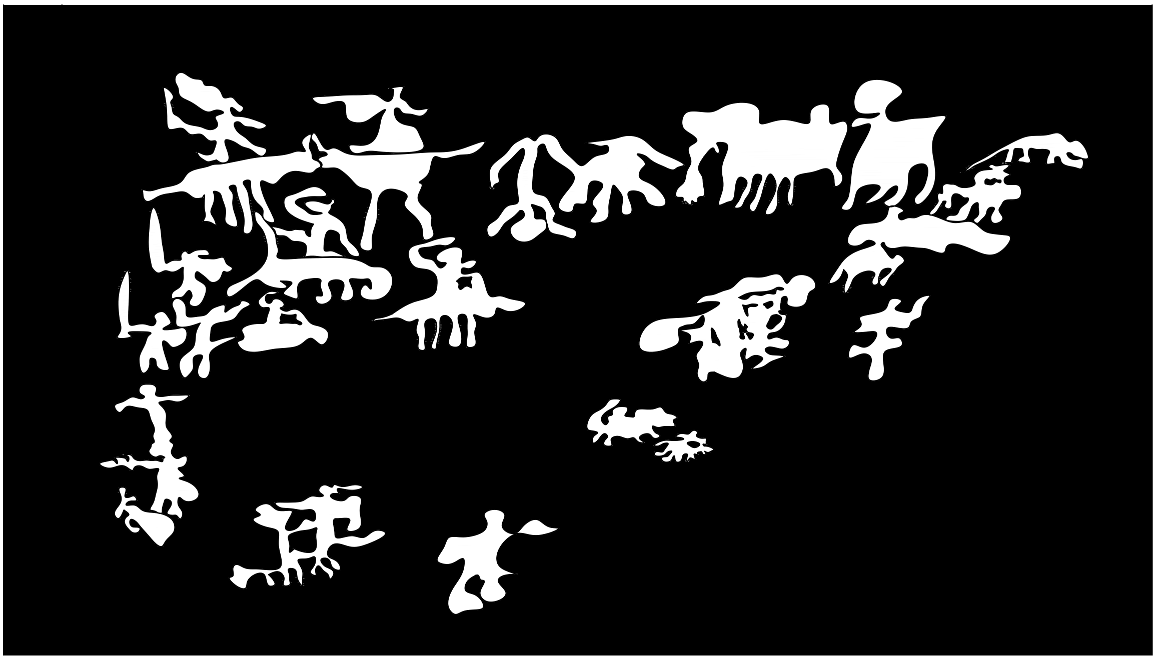


Fig. 4.46.31b Humans and animal riders

Shelter IV

The painting shows many human figures and all are walking towards the right. One person is sitting on an animal holding a weapon. One more person on the animal is shown probably representing a fighting scene. At the right end of this panel, humans were walking, all are made of white pigment (Figs. 4.46.32a-4.46.32b).

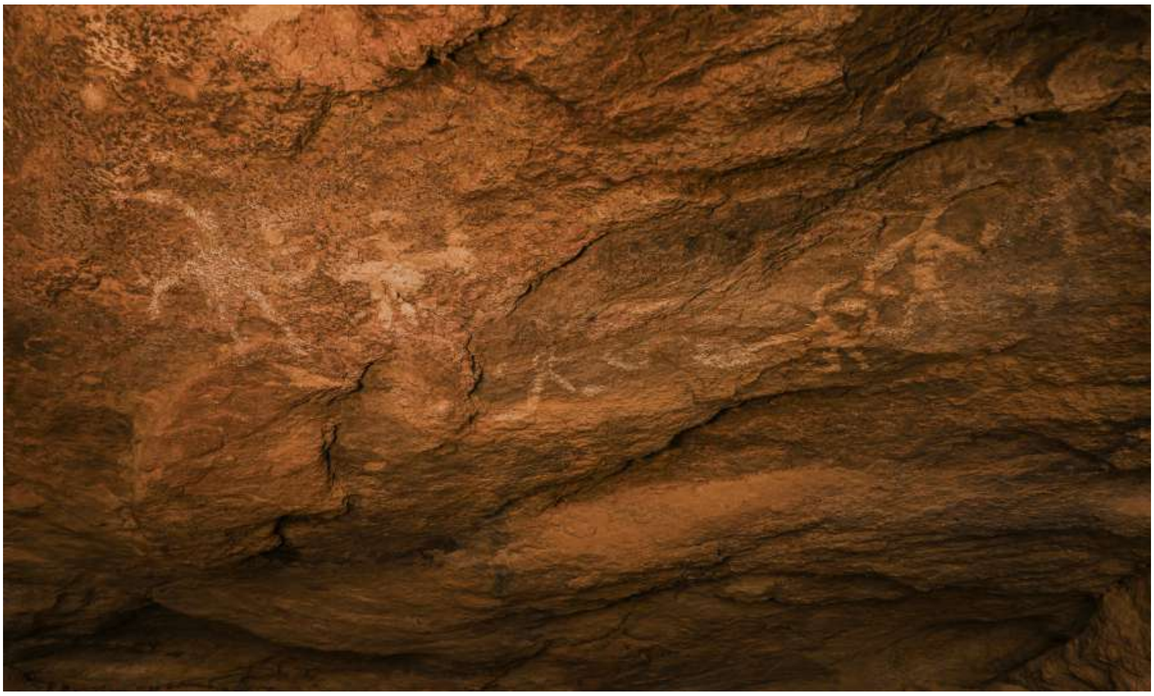


Fig. 4.46.32a Humans

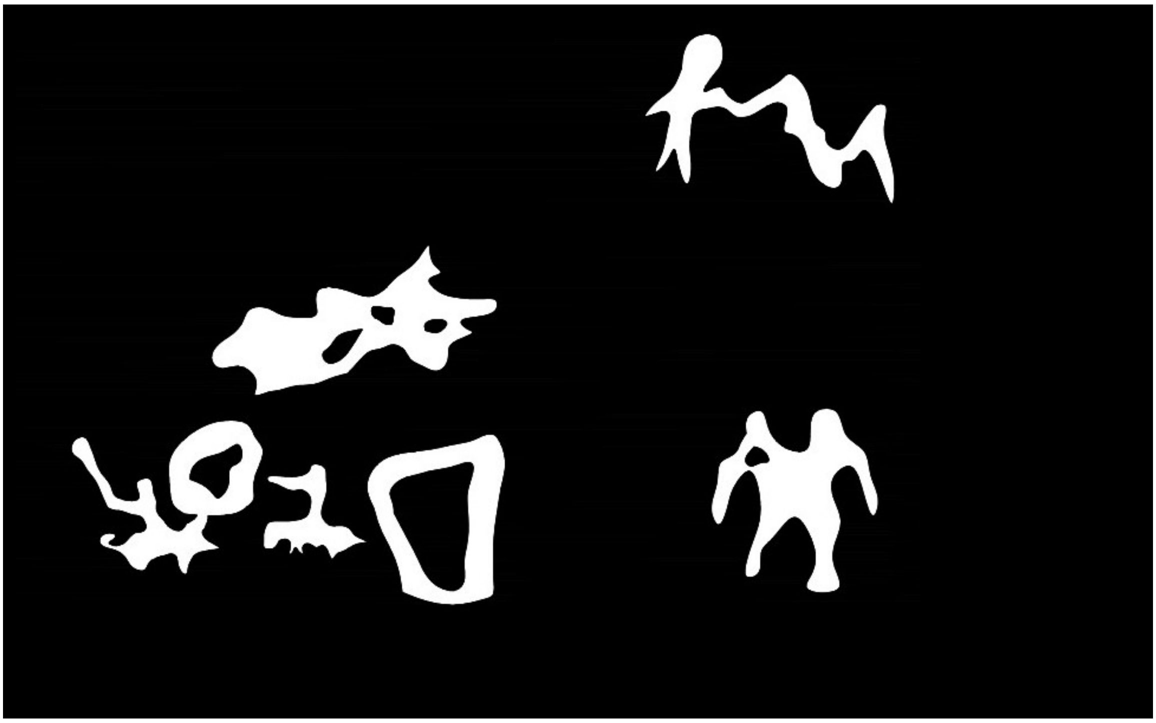


Fig. 4.46.32b Humans

The panel shows that two human figures are depicted. The left human is wearing a crown and holding a weapon. Another human figure is facing the right side, has a round head and extended hands with a weapon (Figs. 4.46.33a-4.46.33b).

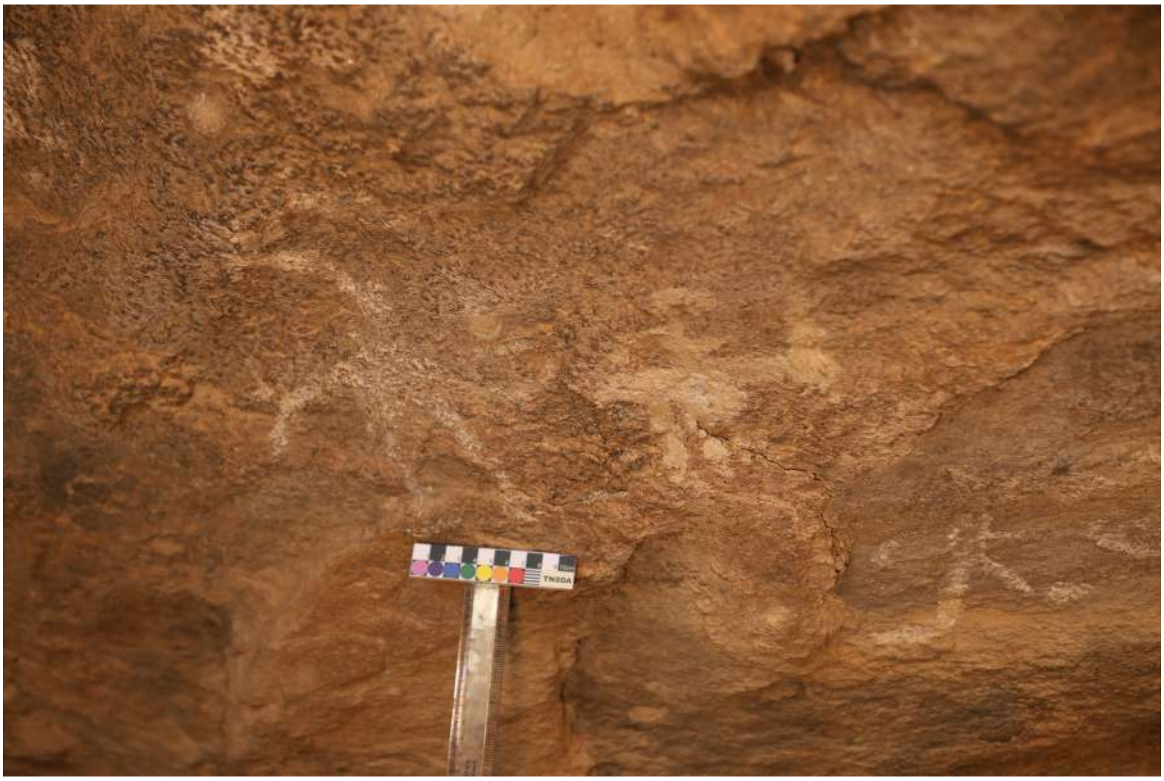


Fig. 4.46.33a Humans

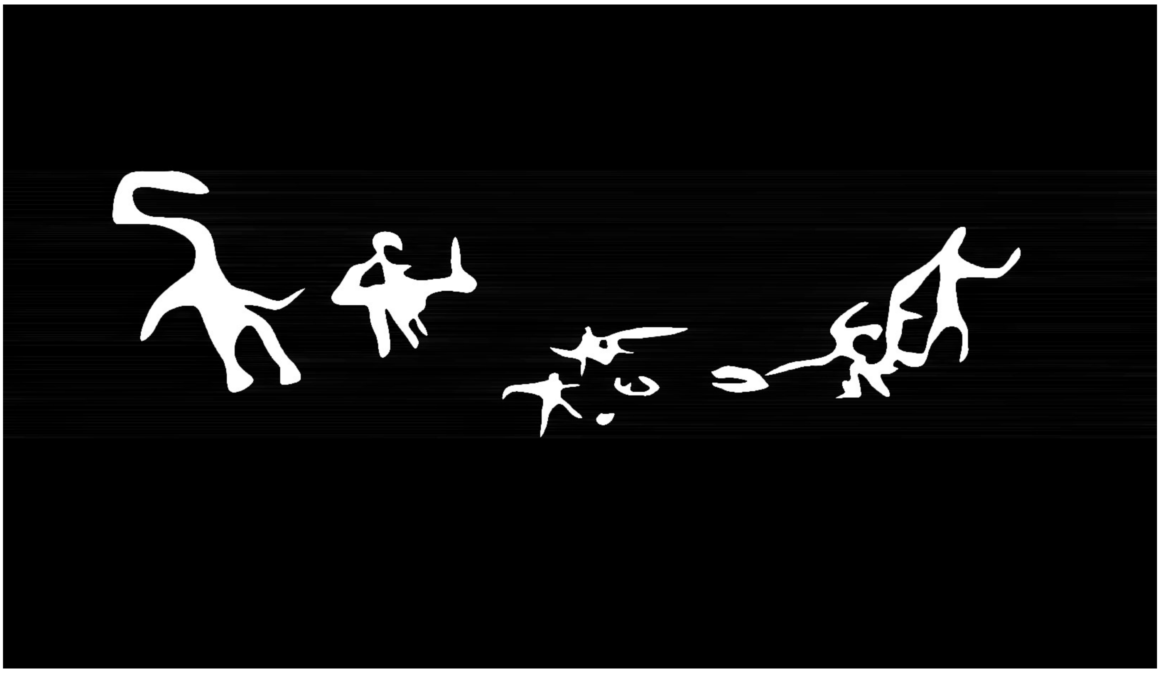


Fig. 4.46.33b Humans

There are two human figures facing right. The left human figure is looking at another person. They hold a long weapon like a spear in both the hands. The second human is walking towards the front with weapons in hand (Figs. 4.46.34a-4.46.34b).

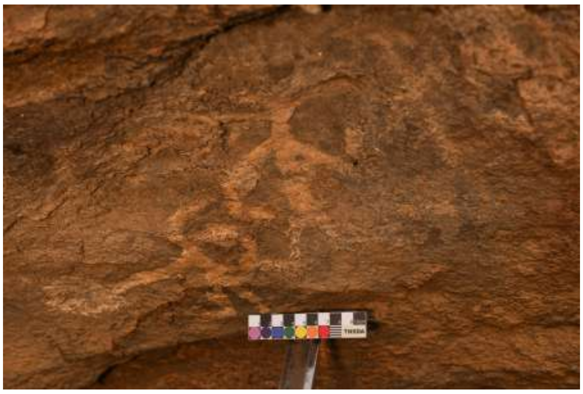


Fig. 4.46.34a Humans

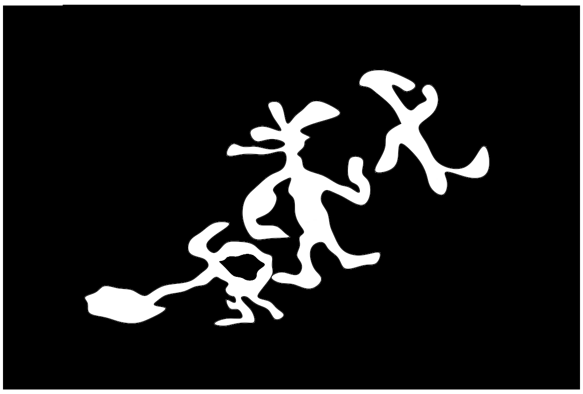


Fig. 4.46.34b Humans

Shelter V

The painting is in circle shape with many small circles are drawn inside like a spider web. It might be a tortoise executed with white pigment (Figs. 4.46.35a-4.46.35b).

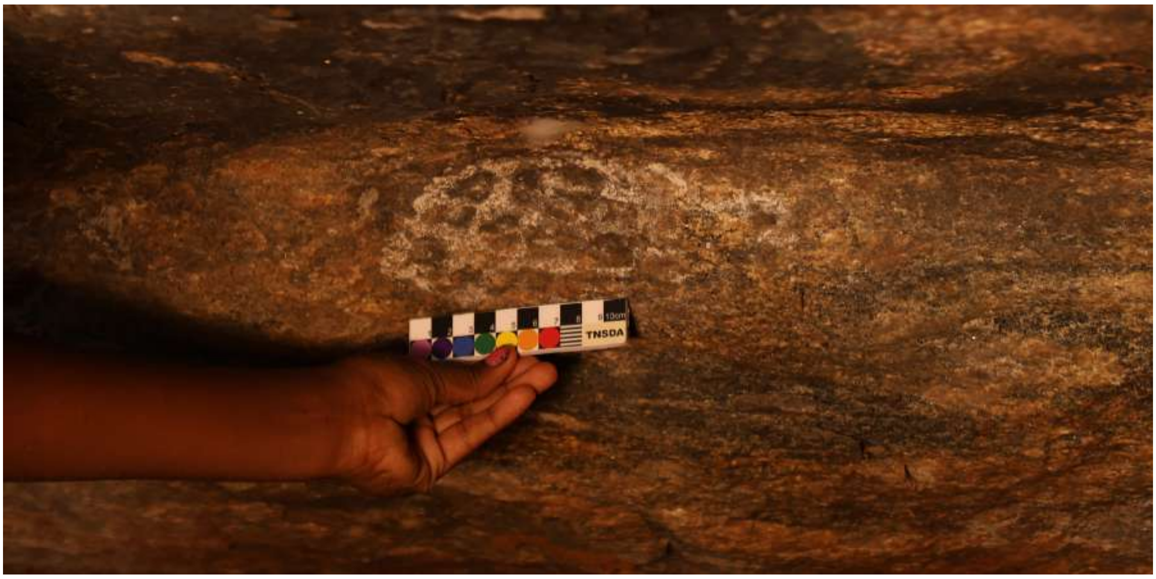


Fig. 4.46.35a Geometrical sign

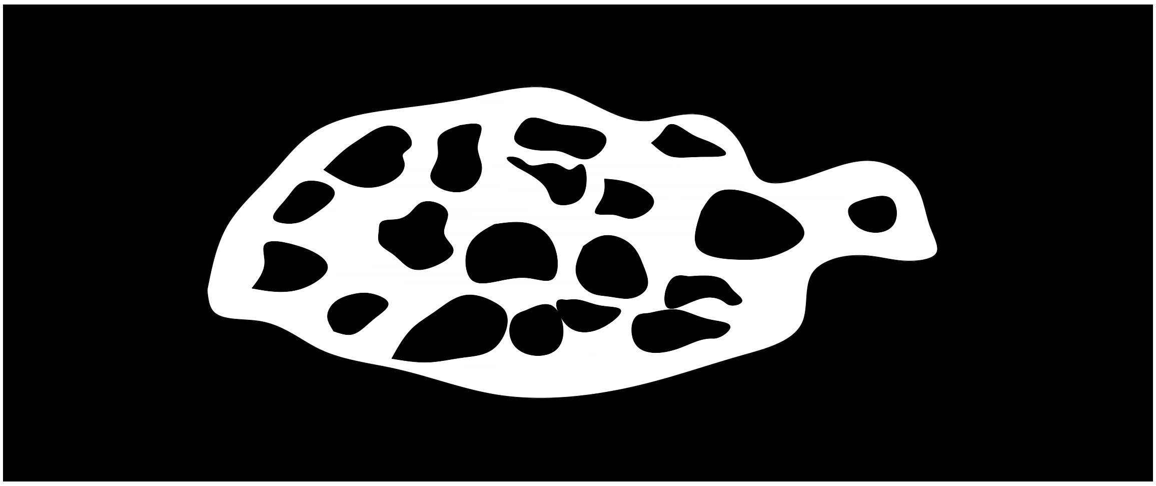


Fig. 4.46.35b Geometrical sign

This panel shows a geometric design, which is in a rectangular shape with a horizontal cross line. In that horizontal line, there is a human in supine position and it might be a dead body, all painted with white pigment (Figs. 4.46.36a-4.46.36b).

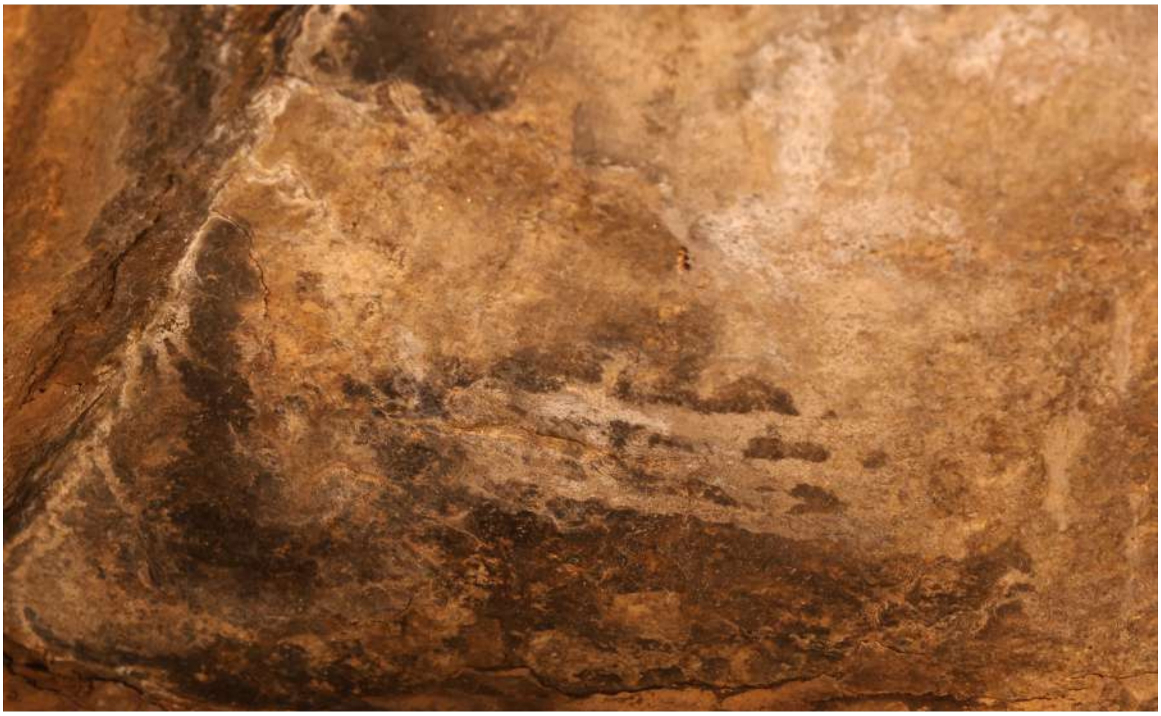


Fig.30 Fig. 4.46.36a Geometrical sign

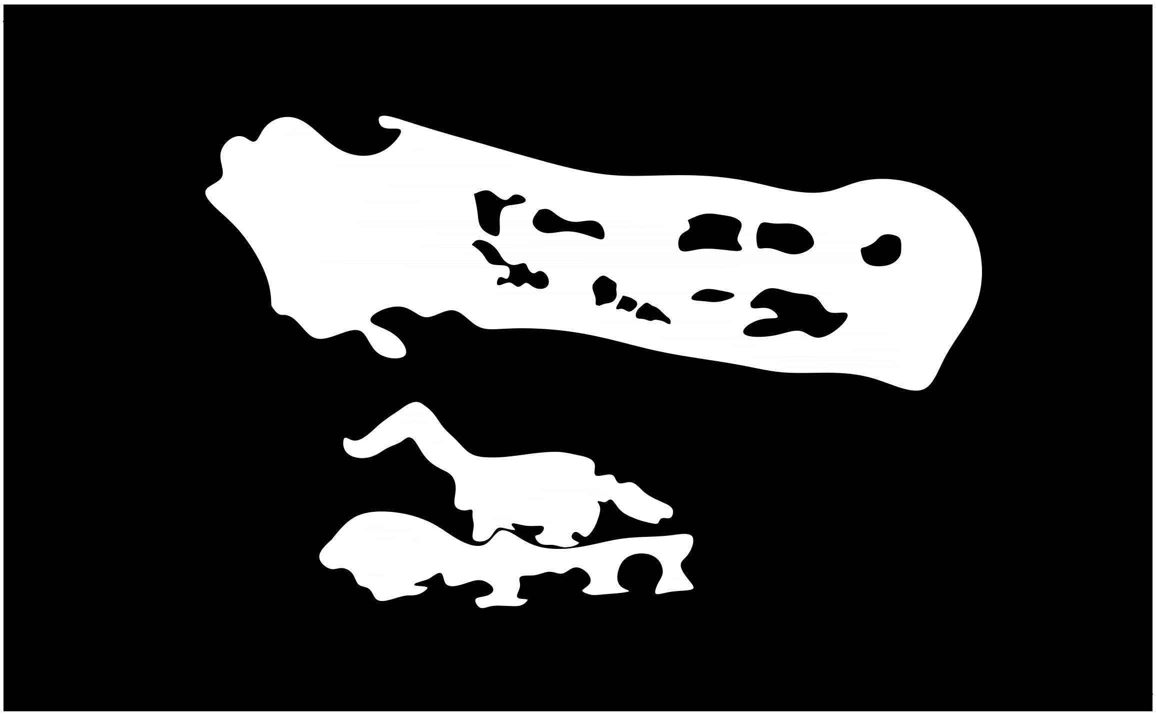


Fig.30 Fig. 4.46.36b Geometrical sign

Chapter-5

ETHNOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter-5

ETHNOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Rock paintings, brushings and engravings are the result of a continuous process that is produced and re-produced over a period of time. In this process, the artists continued to preserve for posterity. The study of contemporary society, particularly the tribal society, living in the same environment may help us to understand the real meaning that stands behind these paintings. Thus, rock art represents past communities' lifestyle and their perceptions. Mostly they display human vs. animal interactions/conflicts, hunting scenes, cattle raids, a clan leader interacting with fellow men, group dances and performing rituals. For understanding these, the most useful approach is to compare the rock art with the ethnic people living in the same area to get a close cognitive context and the painters' own worldview. The ethnic groups living close to the rock art sites are considered the likely descendants of the original owners of the paintings. Keeping in view of these assumptions, the ethnic groups such as Irular and Paliyar communities were studied and their present anthropological status is explained.

The Irulars of the Nilgiris

The rock art sites are noticed in the Nilgiris at Karikkiyur near Kothagiri. The Nilgiri mountains rise spectacularly to an elevation of 2400 m. The highlands, where the Irulars live, are characterised by a temperate monsoonal climate, very different from the tropical plains below. The natural thickly forested hillocks are called *shola* (a corrupt form of *Cholai*). The temperate forest slopes offer good vegetation for Irulars for hoe cultivation. The Irulars have lived for centuries in considerable isolation from the South Indian mainstream cultures. Of late, they have started moving to different locations in the Nilgiris. The Irulars were hunter-gatherers in the past, but now they are moving towards a mixed economy. During ancient times, they lived in permanent hamlets, temporary huts and are rarely under rock shelters. Traces of such practices rarely encountered.

Ethnoscape

The Irulars are known by different names like Irula, Irular, Erilagaru, Iraligar, Kasaba, Kasava, Kasuba, Ten Vanniyan, Vanapalli and Villiyan. Their popular name 'Irula' is an Anglicized one, but they call themselves 'Irular'. The Indian government has notified them as a Scheduled Tribe. Among the 36 scheduled tribes in Tamil Nadu, the Irulars are numerically second largest tribal community. They are divided into 'Nilgiri Irular' and 'Plains Irular'. This autochthonous/indigenous tribal community is widespread across South India. They are found in parts of Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

The Nilgiri Irulars speak a distinct language, which is not understood by people from the plains. Its intonation, articulation and other linguistic features largely reflect a combination of Tamil and Kannada. Younger generations are literate. As television and mass communication are expanding in tribal areas, the Nilgiri Irulars are moving towards the standard Tamil.

Among the Nilgiri Irulars, two distinct subgroups could be identified as per their geographical locations: 'lowland Nilgiri Irulars'. Their settlements are contiguous to the megalithic complexes. These people could possibly be the descendants of the ancient settlers, involved in primitive hoe-cultivation on the Nilgiri slopes during the Neolithic period (Noble and Jebedas 1989). Francis Buchanan who visited the Nilgiris in 1800 gives an overview of how the Irulars live. The lowland Irulars gradually came in contact with the proximal urban centres and colonial plantation estates.

The second sub-group is called 'upland Irulars', who for long have been living in the forested high slopes of the Nilgiris. They have been maintaining a close association and symbiotic relationship with neighbouring Badaga, Kota, Toda and Kurumba (powerful magicians and medicine men) communities. During the Colonial period, plantations continued to spread all over the Nilgiris, which altered their livelihood. Over the centuries, they started a dual lifestyle: as plantation labourers during daytime and hamlet dwellers during the night. Yet kinship, alliance and ritual ties still keep the upland and lowland Irulars in close contact with each other.

Socioscape

The Irulars form an endogamous tribe with the following twelve exogamous patriclans (Sanskrit gotras, Tamil kulams).

Irular patriclans

1. Gurunagan
2. Kalkatti
3. Kuppan
4. Pungan
5. Perathan
6. Koduvan
7. Vellakan
8. Chamban
9. Porigan
10. Devanan
11. Uppuligan
12. Peligan

Members of a patriclan cannot marry members in one or more "brother" patriclans. One has to choose from "affinal" clans. The distributions of these clans are not uniform across Irular settlements. The overall size of these clans also varies from one area to another. This makes the Irulars to move from one location to another in search of an alliance. The Irulars follow the Dravidian kinship system and alliance pattern. An ideal marriage among the Irulars is bilateral cross-cousin marriage: marrying father's sister's son (FZS), mother's brother's daughter (MBD) and elder sister's daughter (eZD).

Culturescape

For understanding the narratives on the Karikkiyur painted rock shelter, a few aspects of Irulars' culturescape need to be inquired into for a holistic understanding.

The Irulars are pantheists, worshipping a wide range of spirits, ancestors, gods, goddesses, animate and inanimate objects, etc. The spirits *(pey)* are both malevolent and benevolent. So, the priests take great care to appease them. A virgin female demon *(kannipey)* is also worshipped with elaborate rituals and rites. In Karikkiyur, an Irular priest appeases the *kannipey* for a month's period (October to November) each year. She makes her appearance by a welcome song on a particular day. Vegetarian offerings are vowed on that day. Following this, on the third day sacrificial offering of meat from a sambar (an Asian deer) must be hunted down. This practice has slowly disappeared as imposed by the Forest Acts. Now, fowls are offered instead of deers.

Ancestor worship is an integral part of the Irular belief system. There are benign and protective ancestral patriclan spirits that guard the interests and well-being of Irular householders. Annual rituals are officiated to these deceased ancestral spirits. People pray for the welfare of the family members. This appeal and ritual offering are called toga. Stone idols of the dead persons are placed near the burial pit, who become the ancestral cults.

Curiously, the Irular cognition on creative power and belief system is a unique one. The Irular shrines and sacred images are not located inside the hamlet but they lie on the outskirts. Still dense forest abodes are considered to be sacred as far as the Irulars are considered. The Irulars of Kallampalayam store their gilt image of Mari (Mariamman), a goddess of smallpox, outside the hamlet in a sacred grove.

The *Kalkatti* (stone-offering) patriclan traditionally supplies priests. The Karikkiyur Irulars also worship Rangasami, who is considered to be the proto-Vishnu. More importantly, the Irular priest wears a thread of the twice-born *(punul)* and officiates the pujas and ceremonies at the Rangasamy temple.

Among the Irulars life-cycle rituals both marriage and death rituals are considered highly symbolized. As the Irulars are survivors of megalithic people, they still make use of stones in their death rituals. Each patriclan has its own burial site, where each household has a separate pit.

At Karikkiyur, several male and female stone figures were kept inside a square block locally called *idukadu/samathi.* According to the Irular community, a stone figure made in memory of a person who expired in various circumstances of placed at idukadu and it was worshiped in the first year. There are several triangular-shaped stones in addition to the stone figures. These triangular-shaped stones were placed initially and in the course of time stone figures took the centre stage.

They are also family or collective burials. The Irulars use to dig a circular pit having a diameter of 150-180 cm and within this pit, another pit is scooped out in side-wevys through the wall of the pit. The size of the pit could be 90-120 cm in height so that one person could be accommodated in a sitting posture easily. On death, the person in padmasana posture is inserted into the side-wall pit and then the entrance of the pit is closed in such a way that the closing wall should not touch the body of the departed soul.

The Irular observe an elaborate death anniversary. It requires huge spending like that of a wedding. At the outset, a small stone idol representing the dead person is made (popularly called *kalleduppu*). The idol is placed under the pure river water for weeks together. Then it is consecrated by the kin of the family near the burial pit. Following this, an elaborate day-wise ritual is officiated as follows:

1. Sunday - banana cake is offered to the idol
2. Monday - the dead soul is given rest
3. Tuesday - custard oil is smeared
4. Wednesday - paddy is offered
5. Thursday - a sumptuous feast is offered
6. Friday - celebration with dance
7. Saturday - celebration with dance

Like a wedding ceremony, all kin and affines are invited to attend these last rites of the dead person. All are served with rich food on all these days. Here, the dead person is anthropomorphised in a stone form that remains the key symbolism in Irular culture.

Rock–Stone Continuum

In Dravidian context, among hill-dwellers rock and stone play a core symbolism across many domains. Mainstream Hindus also worship stone idols. Why this continuum? There is a primordial symbolism that persists from the megalithic period, that enacts a creative process all through its cultural history, wherein stone plays a key role.

Carin-circle, stone-circle, cairn-packing, dolmen, dolmenoid-cist, simple cist, transepted cist, multichambered cist, cist with subsidiary cist, anthropomorphic, menhir, memorial stone, hero-stone, and the like symbolize the significance of the life and soul of the dead person/culture hero. Not only that, ancestral stones were later anthropomorphized into idols for worship and deep reverence. The Nilgiri Irular pantheon is a classic example to inquire into the evolutionary phenomenon.

The origin myth of the Lord Rangasamy goes on like this: on one-night Lord Rangasamy appeared in a dream of an Irular priest and told him that he resides in a stone of the hillock in *Rangasamy Betta* (Rangasamy hill). Curiously, the next morning the priest went there and was amazed to watch that a cow had dropped her milk on a stone near an anthill. When he went close to the scene, he was surprised to note that blood also came out from the stone. He, then, realized what he had heard in his previous night's dream. Immediately, he confirmed that the stone was none other than Lord Rangasamy (proto-Vishnu).The Irular priest consecrated the stone as Lord Rangasamy, an incarnation of proto-Vishnu, which then became the centrepiece of Irular pantheon.

Even outside the religious domain, too, rock shelter and stone-bound hillocks remained a primordial place since megalithic times. It provided a permanent and safe abode across wide range of climatic conditions like hot, stormy and winter seasons. It, further, remained a strong and safe place during tribal warfare.

Having experienced such natural shelters, right from the megalithic days hill-dwellers continue to keep hilly rocks for intermittent stays, offering rituals, and depicting expressive art pieces. No other structure stood up as strong as the rock shelter for the tribals. That is why primitive people chose rock shelters and stone-structures for all of their important activities like placing sacred images, burial sites, making sacred objects and making religious idols. Thus, the rock-stone continuum remains a primordial symbolism among autochthon tribal communities in Dravidian India.

The Irular hamlet, Karikkiyur, is not far away from the present rock-shelter, where large clusters of rock-paintings are found well preserved. The vicinity of a rock-art shelter is convenient for Irulars. It is a good source of a place for their living. High quality honey (*malai then* – 'hill honey') is available all-round the year, as the rock shelter provides safety for the honey-bees. The tors on the hill protect the honeycombs. One way or another the rock-shelters continue to play a key role to the hunting and gathering way of subsistence. The Irular tribe also habituates this place till date.

The location of Karikkiyur painted rock-shelter is now called by the Nilgiri-Irulars as *porivari,* which is a corrupt form of *peruvarai* (*peru* > 'big'; *varai* > 'hillock'). The term *peruvarai* is an ancient Tamil word that is frequently mentioned in the Sangam literature. *Varai* is the root word, which means hillock and the adjective prefix peru means 'big'. There are many such prefixes to *varai*, like *netuvarai* ('lengthy hillock'), etc. If one goes on to study the entire Tamil region, there could be more such prefixes attested to this root word. The foregoing discussion briefly denotes the importance of stone images in Irular culture.

Keeping in view the socio-cultural context of the Irulars, the rock paintings observed at porivarai rock-shelter are perceived. The thematic expression of the paintings could not match with the rites and rituals performed by the Irular community. However, the paintings reflect the rituals of another contemporary community living at the foothill close to Lingapuram. The Iron Age megalithic monuments were reported at Kolimokkai near Lingapuram on the banks of the river Bhavani. There is another hillock called Kolikodu, just opposite to Karikkiyur rock-shelter, where one could notice dolmens.

Irular of Padiyenthal

Padiyenthal is a small, low-lying rock lying 2.50-3.00 m height from the cultivable fields outside the village. The rock is locally called as *Irular-kal* (lit.: the rock of Irular tribe). The rock shelter can accommodate no more than 10 persons at a time. Even today the Irulars are inhabiting the region. They have a mixed economy with the remnants of hunting and gathering. Ethnographically speaking this site presents a realistic experience, long memories, and empirical knowledge of the prehistoric livelihood. In the past, scholars suggested that the present day food – gatherers were the direct descendants of prehistoric population. Recent DNA analysis of ancient Indian population also suggests that Irulars form one of the oldest ethnic substrata of this subcontinent.

Paliyar of Sirumalai (Western Ghats)

Ethnonym

Paliyars are the indigenous inhabitants of this hill range. They are the sons of the soil; inhabiting here over countries. The Sangam literature refers to them as Palaiyar (Akam. 331), that literally means ‘ancient people’. There is a proverb about their ancestry. “If one doesn’t know the hillocks, one is not a Paliyar”. They are experts on their hills, forests, topography, climate, resources, etc.

Enculturalized Topography

Hills and forests are part and parcel of Paliyar life. Each rock has a specific name given by their ancestors. For them, hill topography is not a physical entity, but it is beloved kin. They admire it as a dear one and always treat it affectionately. Their topography is enculturalized and socialized as follows:

1. The biggest rock of the hill in addressed as --- *Nappattan* (fourth grandfather)
2. The next bigger rock --- *Muppattan* (third grandfather)
3. The next bigger rock --- second grandfather
4. The next bigger rock --- grandfather
5. The next bigger rock --- children
6. The next bigger rock --- grand-children
7. The next bigger rock --- great grand children

Socio-cultural Setting

At present, the livelihood of the Paliyars varies from place to place. In low range Sirumalai hills they have taken up wage labour as their main source of income. In deep forest areas they have taken up casual wage labour along with their traditional gathering in the forest, bartering or selling their minor forest produces and occasional labour for agricultural neighbours and forest contractors.

From the colonial period onwards, their livelihood seems to have changed considerably due to the enforcement of new forest laws, which forbid hunting game animals. Now-a-days Paliyars do maintain close contact with Paliyars of other localities, and try to develop friendly relations with neighbouring non-Paliyar populations. Naidu and Pillai caste Hindus are the dominant land owners in Sirumalai, under whom the Paliyars work as daily or contract labourers in coffee estates, lemon, banana and vegetable gardens. Sirumalai banana is a rare and rich variety which fetches them a reasonable income.

Their traditional mode of subsistence dependent on gathering forest produce has considerably reduced. The Paliyars know many species of flora in the forest and they collect them for culinary and medicinal purposes, as well as for Ayurveda and Siddha medical agents, who pay very little amount for this.

Paliyar gather some varieties of roots (mainly of wild yams) that are available seasonally. They also collect nuts, fruits, barks, spices, soapnuts and other forest produces., Paliyar have extensive knowledge of collecting four varieties of honey which is used for their own consumption and for sales. Their traditional food-gathering technique is rather unique that supports their livelihood partially. The forest is a generous provider of food and other material requirements.

Presently, economic sources inside the forest are on the decline as the Forest Department has made strict laws preventing access to forest resources. Hunting is totally banned now. Therefore, each family operates independently. The Paliyar division of labour is simple and there is no gender discrimination. As hunting is forbidden strictly, both men and women flexibly interchange their domestic and economic chores. Spouses carry out the majority of economic activities together and share other domestic pursuits.

From earliest times, Paliyars appear to have had regular contacts with neighbouring plains agriculturalists and exchanged their minor forest produces. The Sangam poetry elaborately mentions that the tribal communities inhabited the forests with a wide range of subsistence activities. The Paliyars exactly attest the Sangam literature.

The Paliyars believe in natural spirits in and around their locality, particularly on hilltops, in water sources, in high trees and in the rock caves. They have incorporated the Hindu deities of neighbouring people in to their pantheon.

The Paliyars do experience a supernatural world. There are benign and protective ancestral patriclan spirits and the spirits of ancestors. Such spirits are propitiated regularly for the welfare of the family members. There are also roaming evil spirits *(Pey)*. These spirits are malevolent in nature and they possess and cause illness.

A virgin female demon (*Kannipey*) is also worshipped. Some of the spirits are residing around the rock shelter.

Appeasing of ancestral and natural spirits is so important for the wellbeing of the household members. By and large, these spirits are ambivalent in nature. If they propitiate them regularly they will be protected, and if they ignore them then they will be affected. Though the tribal Paliyar treat minor ailments with herbal medicines, they also handle some of the illnesses through possession rites if the complaints are undiagnosed and serious.

Ethno-archaeological Significance

In the Sirumalai rock art assemblages, we could find a number of depictions which are wide ranging in nature. Among the numerous drawings, human beings are drawn naturally, stylistically and schematically.

Faunal images come next to human beings. A number of animal species, both wild and domestic, including deer, wild boar, wild dog, horse, elephant, birds and reptiles are depicted in various sizes and patterns. Moreover, these figures are drawn either individually or in groups, indicating the human- animal- nature ecosystem. And they are drawn in silhouette or in solid forms. All such meaningful features intricately explain the rock art shelter's long period of usage.

A careful ethnographic investigation of these rock art assemblages emphasizes a multi-dimensional cultural development in the hill region. Human figures with swords and shields mark the Iron Age development. In some portions of the panel, spears and arrows are used by the hunters. These polar variables indicate a multi-level cultural evolution of this region.

Further, the rock art assemblages in Sirumalai give a dimension on the establishment and functioning of chieftainship in the hill region (*Kuriñci)*. The elephant figures are drawn with their riders. In some panels, elephants are seen in their natural environment. The chieftains during the Sangam period generously donated elephants to the visiting bards who sung panegyric poems praising the kings and their noble countries. The tusks of elephants were also used as a precious item in making ornaments. The hill chieftains along with his soldiers and hunters might have camped under the rock shelters. At that time, well-trained painters might have drawn various figures.

The rock paintings depict several motifs like hunting, animal figures, varieties of domestic and wild animals, anthropomorphs performing different activities, etc. Inside the wide panel some paintings are less visible and some are superimposed or overlapped.

The panel of paintings clearly portrays a well-defined hierarchy of people, at least three sets of groups. A chieftain or a war leader could be inferred. Soldiers who had excelled in their warfare or territorial management were given special status by means of wearing headgears. Finally, commoners could also be seen in this panel. Within the panel, some figurines need to be grouped together for better understanding, rather than being identified individually.

The rock art scenario of this cave site indicates a possible existence of an agro-pastoral territory governed by a well dominant territorial or ethnic king as mentioned in the Sangam literature. Such leaders were classified into three categories: *Cirurmannar* (king of a small place), *Mutukutimannar* (king of an ethnic group) and *Kurunilamannar* (king of a moderate region).

Relations between rock art and ritual practice gain momentum at this site. Rock art making was not only a cultural knowledge, but it was a form of communication. The annual or periodic practice of ritual observance was recorded on the rocks which were renewed from one generation to another. Rock art motifs and images were repeatedly drawn for homeopathic function, i.e., "like produces like". Hunting motif activates successful hunting. Painted figures of elephant catching yielded elephants for domestication. Thus, the rock art site was a specialized place for a specialized function.

Rock shelters also functioned as ritual places. Rock art production and ritual practices could be established concretely with the help of contemporary or direct ethnographic analogy. Rock art makers in Sirumalai site were simultaneously involved in "performance" and "participation" in ritual practices. The rock paintings are quite significant in a ritual sense. Repeated productions of a few forms of motifs are communicative value. The motifs drawn in the rock panel indicate supportive data from ethnographic evidences of nearby Paliyar tribe. The rock art assemblage further indicates the 'invariance' and 'persistent' nature of motifs that communicate a canonical message in this rock shelter.

The frequency of faunal imageries on the rock shelters clearly indicates the livelihood of cattle-keepers who had camped or domesticated on the hill terrains. The pastoral activity is always associated with hunting games, ritual activities, etc. Seasonal camping during the winter season demanded a safe and protected shelter. The cave shelters provided such safe places for the cattle-keepers.

The Sangam literature is a treasure trove of rich cultural sources. It mentions three kinds of pastorals namely: *Nallinattayar, Pullinattayar* and *Kovinattayar.* The rock paintings, somehow, depict motifs related to such categorization. C.K.Praveen (2016), mentions a special shelter for goats (*attala*) in his rock art study in Kerala, which was a Chera territory (Tamil kingdom) during the Sangam period.

Pre-neolithic economy and the neolithic cattle keeping economy are overlapped in these rock paintings. Lengthy rock shelters might have provided seasonal abodes for both hunter-gatherers and cattle keepers, who had drawn their own paintings in such rock shelters.

Faunal depictions are naturally higher in number than the floral drawings. Both flora and fauna are naturalistic in origin. They are intricately drawn on the rocky surface that stretches over a long and continuous chronological periods. Though the depictions are naturalistic and realistic in nature, the stylistic and schematic natures of pictographs infer some clues for the chronological order.

The depiction of prehistoric human figures is distinct and old style. There is yet another style of human beings who possess weapons, ornaments and other motifs are certainly belong to a subsequent period either of Iron Age or Early Historic. Some patterns found in this shelter are extremely fragmentary in nature, which implies the temporal variability of this rock art site.

The present day Paliyars who live nearby this rock shelter have gradually reduced their association with this shelter, as they crossed over the heroic age of livelihood. The chieftains who ruled the hills were eliminated by the then emperors. Now-a-days Paliyars worship their spirits and deities in and around their hilly forest.

Paliyar of Usilampatti (Western Ghats)

Paliyars of Usilampatti uncharacteristically do not address their patri-clans separately. They identify their clans through their clan deity. The conjugal family is the basic economic unit. Each family has separate leaf shelters on the hills to look after their hoe-cultivation and gathering activities.

Many Paliyars have come down from the hills and inhabit in government allotted areas, which lie at the foothills. The hill Paliyars of Usilampatti experience a slow process of Hinduization over the decades. Due to the influence of the neighbouring Hindus, they had started worshipping Hindu deities. In many areas, Paliyars continue to live in their traditional hill ranges where Hinduization process is absent. Therefore, the hill Paliyars continue to worship their deities and spirits located in and around their hill tracks.

The Paliyars have their own shrines on the hilltops, water sources, caves, high trees and in rocks. Till date, these shrines are in the same locations. Through the present day Kurinji Nagar Paliyar (Usilampatti Paliyar) were brought down to the foothills three decades ago by the Government, they still go to the hilltops and worship their traditional deities. Such deities are as follows:

1. Karuppacami (Korali casta)
2. Vaccimalaiyan
3. Palicciyam’man
4. Periyakaruppucami
5. Kannimar
6. Sivan
7. Minatciyam’man
8. Hanuman
9. Durka

By and large, the Paliyar religion is distinct from the neighbouring Tamil agriculturalists and urban settlers. They do not construct permanent structures for their deities. Further, they do not have shrines inside their settlements as well.

Palicciyamman is their principal goddess. Karuppasamy is otherwise referred to as Korali Sastha. *Periyakaruppsamy* (elder deity) is also an important deity. Virgin goddess (*Kannimar*) is protective in nature. Sivan, Meenakshiamman, Hanuman and Durga are the other gods worshipped by the Paliyars. It is clear evidence that the Paliyars acculturatet towards polytheistic Hinduism.

After they had settled down at the foothills, they had created small shrines for worshipping the following deities:

1. Mariamman
2. Vaccimalaiyan
3. Cinna Karuppasamy
4. Santana Mariyamman
5. Vinaayagar
6. Paandisamy

Mariamman, a goddess of smallpox, is not a familiar deity on the hills. It is worshipped by the plains people. It is an interesting phenomenon in tribal culture in Tamil Nadu. *Vaccimalaiyan* is a proto–type of Lord Vishnu and a replica of Lord Krishna. *Cinna Karuppasamy* and *Paandisamy* are both indigenous deities. *Santana Mariamman* (Sandal goddess of smallpox) and *Vinaayagar* (Lord Ganesh) are the Hindu gods recently accepted by the Paliyars.

Increasing exposure to the plains peoples has led the Paliyars to adopt the Hindu deities of the Tamil region. Though the Paliyar pantheon is getting acculturated, the rock art shelter continues to uphold the aniconic indigenous deity *Cinnu Veeru Sami* residing in *Cittirakkal Potavu*, who is exclusively propitiated by the Paliyars.

Some of the panels of figures containing animal and human show the painter's cognitive vision and empirical observation on the man-animal-nature relationship. Such kinds of assemblages are a kind of worldview of the primitive people. Primitive art implicitly addresses its immediate environment.

Several rock shelters are essentially diachronic in nature. It shows that many drawings belong to two different periods. The depictions of the older period are essentially larger in size, while the later ones are comparatively smaller in nature. This kind of structural variations are a continued process in both biological and cultural evolution. This analogy is reflected in Kurinji Nagar art forms.

The non-literate art forms characterize some kind of linear feature. The portraiture is arbitrary and conventionalized. And above all, both white and black colours are effectively used. Such a portrayal is unique to the Western Ghats only.

The people of this hill tract had executed realistic presentations. The figures like elephant, deer, wild fowl, birds, bulls, etc., are conventionalized, and so are the human figures. In general, the surrounding environment is reflected in their presentations. In some panels 'extreme conventionalization' in design is found. Many striking examples of this kind could be seen in many panels. The artist's "expression of experience" and "interpretation of experience" are essentially communicative in value. Further, we can also notice that numerous figurines are aimed at delivering cultural meanings, rather than aesthetic appreciation. In a few cases the realistic portrayals are acting as a symbolic presentation as well. On the whole, the vast body of artistic expressions recognizes at least three stages of expressive art - "Origin, evolution and change".

Kurumbars of Eastern Ghats

The rock shelters observed in Eastern ghats are generally noticed at the foothills and they have naturally carved space for human domestication. Even during rainy season people could camp there safely. The well raised rock shelters, one way or other, make the place more accommodative for periodic stay. The available water sources on the hillock in the form of pits, low-lying cuts and hallows might have allowed the people to stay there till their task was completed.

The present day Kurumbars might have been the representatives of the past hunter-gatherers and pastoral communities of this region. These communities are the surviving representatives of *Kurunji* and *Mullai* tracts who colonised this region during prehistoric times. The rock paintings depict a wide range of themes and motifs related to *Kurunji* and *Mullai* lifestyles.

The present day Kurumbars inhabiting this region worship ancestral spirits as well as forest/hill spirits. The hill or forest spirits are supernaturals associated with particular hill or rock precipices. The ancestral spirits, on the other hand, are linked to specific lineages or families, give protection against misfortune and are beneficent at times of need. Both ancestral and hill spirits are propitiated at regular intervals in order to get their help and support. Such spirits are earmarked on the rocks.

Thus, the paintings reflect manifold activities such as subsistence, ritual, cultural and aesthetic. All the rock shelters are open to the native inhabitants. They performed rituals at specific intervals. Ceremonial activities were also performed in cyclical and repetitive schedules. All such activities convey some definite canonical message. Each rock art motif is a symbol that carries a particular message. The message had been transferred from generation to generation. The images are the portrayal of primitive people who reveal an admirable sense of drawing skill with meanings through symbols. They utilized the space to create more meanings. They seem to have conceptualized cosmic space and sacred divinity. Here, the panel of drawings are more meaningful, where humans are divinized and divines are humanized.

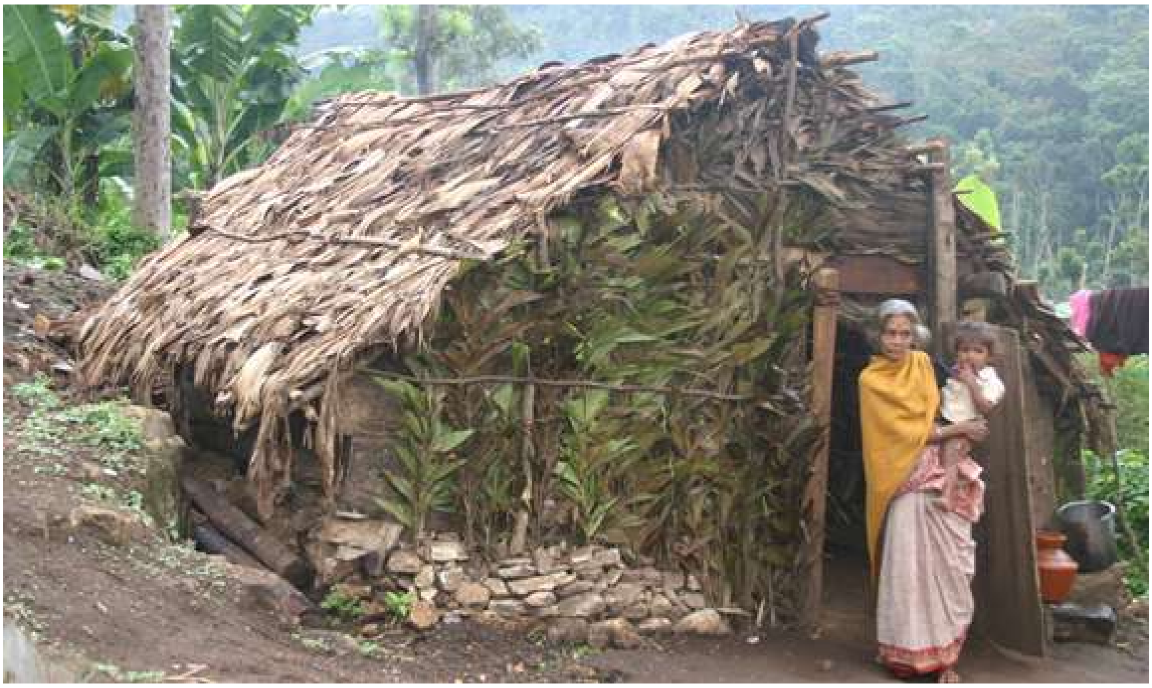


Fig. 5.1. Traditional house of Paliyar

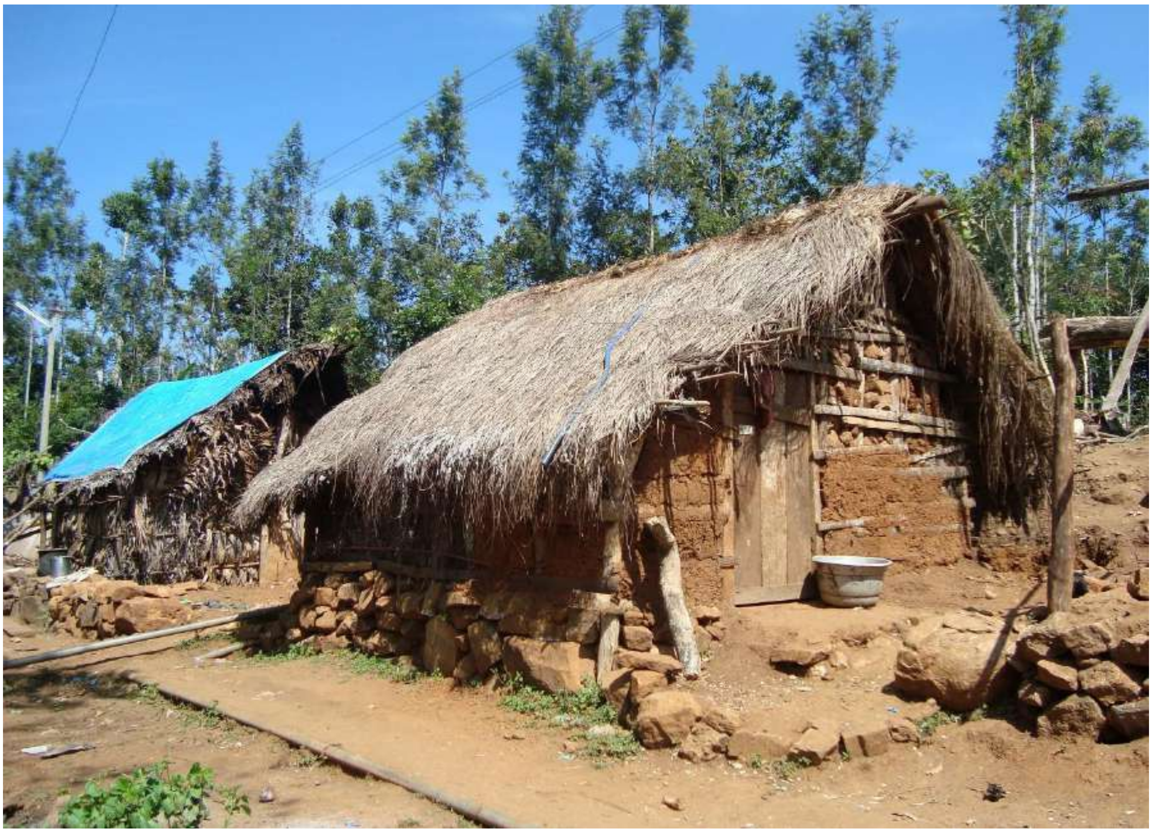


Fig. 5.2. Traditional house of Paliyar

APPENDIX

Appendix 1.1: Rock Art Sites in Tamil Nadu					
S.No	**Site**	**District**	**Rock Art**	**Pigment**	**Reference**
1	Andipatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Neolithic Grooves	--	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
2	Alagarmalai	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 111-114
3	Alaikkallu (Kozhiuthu)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White, Black	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 18
4	Alambadi	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 21
5	Alangayam	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 53,54
6	Alankuppam	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
7	Aliyabadpalayam	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
8	Aliyar	Coimbatore	Rock Painting	White	Joseph Thomas, 2014 & 2015
9	Aluruttimalai (Ammachattram)	Pudukkottai	Rock Painting	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 148-150
10	Amaravathi Nagar	Tiruppur	Rock Painting	Red, White, Black	New Discovery
11	Anaigundu	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
12	Anaipatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red	Rajan 2013: 80
13	Andimalai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
14	Anjukulipatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 50-53
15	Appukkal	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	Rajan 2013: 80

16	Arasalapuram	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
17	Arugaveli	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 76-80
18	Athithangal	Ranipet (Ranipettai)	Engraving	--	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
19	Attukaranpatti	Tiruchirappalli	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 152
20	C.Gettur	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Red, White	Subramaniyan 2022: 59
21	Chandrapuram	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 55
22	Chatrapatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White, Black	Bharathi 2023: 54-57, Kumaran et.al., 2022: 19
23	Chennarayan palli	Vellore	Rock Painting, Engraving	White	Sridhar 2005: 52,53
24	Chinna Kandilii	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting, Engraving	white	New Discovery
25	Chinnabellarampalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Black, White	Murugesan 2022: 66
26	Chinna-Damal-Cheruvu	Vellore	Rock Painting	white	New Discovery
27	Chinnapalayam-Pakkam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
28	Chokkarishi-Kuppam (Molugungundu)	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
29	Cholavaram	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
30	Desupalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
31	Devankurichimalai	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 125

32	Devarmalai	Pudukkottai	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 142,143
33	Devarmukkulam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
34	Echampattu	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
35	Elayanegaram	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
36	Emakathapuram	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20
37	Erasakkanayakanur (Perumalmalai)	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 93
38	Eriyur	Dharmapuri	Rock Painting		New Discovery
39	Erthangal	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	Subramaniyan 2022: 57,58
40	Gangaleri	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
41	Gangavaram	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	--	Murugesan 2022: 66
42	Gittapalli	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
43	Gollapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
44	Gulamdarkka	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
45	I. Kunthapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Red, White	Murugesan 2022: 66
46	Iduhatti	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 34
47	Jagadevipalayam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
48	K.Mottur	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
49	Kadattikuttai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66

50	Kallpattu	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
51	Kalpudavu-Murukkodai	Theni	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 81-82
52	Kamalapuram	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
53	Kamayakundanpatti	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 39
54	Kandli	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
55	Kappai	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
56	Karadikootam	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 69-70
57	Karadippatti	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red, White	Yatheeskumar
58	Karagur	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
59	Karikkiyur	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 35,36
60	Karkur	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
61	Karungalakudi	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red	Sridhar 2005: 42
62	Karuvelampatti (Vekiruttu-alai)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20
63	Kilanamandi	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
64	Keelavalavu	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red, Yellow	Bharathi 2023: 99,100
65	Kidaripatti	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red	Sridhar 2005: 41

66	Kilakuyilkudi	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 115,116
67	Kilvalai	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 15-18
68	Kodandur	Tiruppur	Rock Painting	Red, White	New Discovery
69	Kollur	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 24
70	Kombaikkadu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 59-61
71	Kombapatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
72	Konavakkarai	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 33
73	Kongarpuliyankulam	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 106-108
74	Kothaiyurumbu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Engraving	--	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20
75	Kothakuppam	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
76	Kothamarikuppam	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
77	Kottamitta	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
78	Kottaramadugu	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
79	Kottotaipatti	Theni	Rock Painting	Nil	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
80	Kovanur	Coimbatore	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 28-31
81	Kudumipatti	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
82	Kudumiyanmalai hill	Pudukkottai	Rock Painting	Red, Black	Arul Murugan (nd): 81-89
83	Kuliratti (Chaduragiri)	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157

84	Kumbavarai	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
85	Kumuttipati	Coimbatore	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 51
86	Kundalapuliyur	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
87	Kundukottai (Attipallam falls)	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
88	Kurinchi Nagar (Vasimalai)	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 199-122
89	Kuruvikarankottai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
90	Kuruvi-Nayanapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 29
91	Kuttalatti	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Nil	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
92	Lakshmi Ammal puram	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
93	Lingundram	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
94	Maharajakadai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 27,28
95	Mahimandalam hill	Vellore	Rock Painting, Engraving	White	New Discovery
96	Mailadumparai-Mayavarmalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting, Engraving	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 64-68
97	Malaipatti	Virudhunagar	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
98	Malaiyadipatti	Pudukkottai	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 151
99	Malayampattu	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery

100	Mallachandiram	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 28,29
101	Mallaiyapuram	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20-21
102	Mallapadi	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 26,27
103	Malttampatti	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	--	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
104	Masinakudi	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
105	Mathakadiputhur	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	New Discovery
106	Mavadaippu	Tiruppur	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
107	Mayiladumparai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting, Neolithic Grooves	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 29,30
108	Mealpatti	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
109	Meenakshipuram, Aambalkudimalai	Virudhunagar	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 137
110	Meenur	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
111	Mekalachinnampalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
112	Melakuppam	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
113	Melkupsanavur	Vellore	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
114	Melnukiyur (Bikkanappalli)	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
115	Melpattu	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai

116	Melur	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 132
117	Mettuppatti	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
118	Mittapalli	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
119	Modikuppam	Tiruvannamalai	Rock Painting	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
120	Moongilpudur	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
121	Morasapalli	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
122	Mudippinayanapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
123	Mullakollai	Vellore	Rock Painting	--	New Discovery
124	Mullakuttai (Narimedu)	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
125	Muluvi	Salem	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
126	Munandippatti	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red, White	Yathees Kumar 2006
127	Mungappattu	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
128	Mungilgudikkadu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20-21
129	Murugamalai	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 97,98
130	Muttupatti	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 40
131	Muttupatti	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 117

132	Nachammalai	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
133	Nadumuthalaikulam	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 118
134	Nagal	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
135	Nainavaraialai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 22
136	Nalanganallur	Pernambut (Pernampattu)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
137	Nallan pillai petral	Villupuram	Engraving, Neolithic Grooves	--	New Discovery
138	Nallapalaiyam	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
139	Namalaigundu (Chokkarishikuppam)	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
140	Nanthankalvai	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
141	Narayanapuram	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	New Discovery
142	Nayanur	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157, Sridhar 2005: 22
143	Neganurpatti	Villupuram	Rock Painting	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
144	Neivanattam	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
145	Nelkuttipali	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	--	New Discovery
146	Nelpalialai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Black, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 22-23

147	Nelvai	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
148	Netterimalai	Vellore	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
149	Oppathavadi	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 30
150	Oramanagunda	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Subramaniyan 2022: 36,37
151	Othikuppam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 30
152	Othiyattur	Salem	Rock Painting	Red	Joseph Thomas, 2014 & 2015
153	Ovamalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 24
154	Pachiganapalli	Dharmapuri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
155	Pachur	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
156	Padippallam	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
157	Padiyandal	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 23
158	Paiyampalli	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
159	Paiyur	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
160	Pakkam	Villupuram	Rock Painting, Neolithic Grooves	White	New Discovery
161	Pakkialai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 22
162	Palarupatti	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157

163	Pandiyanparai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	Saranya
164	Panniyur	Tiruvannamalai	Rock Painting	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
165	Paravaikkal	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
166	Pathiri	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
167	Pazhaiyapettai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
168	Penneshwaramadam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
169	Periyaduraikombai	Palani	Rock Painting	White	Kumarn, Saranya, Yathees Kumar
170	Periyakottapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
171	Perumukkal	Villupuram	Engraving	--	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
172	Perumuttam	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
173	Pogalur	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
174	Poonkulam	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
175	Poraiyur	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
176	Pulipatti	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red	Bharathi 2023: 133
177	Puthur hill	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 102-105
178	Ragunathapuram	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, Yellow	New Discovery
179	Rajakuppam	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery

180	Ramarajapuram	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 24
181	Rathinagiri hill	Ranipet (Ranipettai)	Rock Painting	White	Subramaniyan 2022: 57
182	Samarishi Kuppam	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
183	Sangaranmalaipatti	Karur	Rock Painting	--	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
184	Sanjeevi hill	Virudhunagar	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 138
185	Sathgur	Vellore	Rock Painting	--	New Discovery
186	Sempalli	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
187	Sendathur	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
188	Serpakkam	Kancheepuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
189	Settavarai	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 19,20
190	Seykundram	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
191	Sikur	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 34,35
192	Sirumalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 44,45
193	Sirunagalur	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, White	New Discovery
194	Sirupakkam	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
195	Sitharevu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 71
196	Sittanavasal	Pudukkottai	Rock Painting	Red, Yellow	Arul Murugan (nd): 60-80
197	Sivanathapuram	Vellore	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157

198	Sundarajapuram Samiyarpudavu	Theni	Rock Painting	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 83-83
199	Sundekuppam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Red, White	Murugesan 2022: 67
200	Tatrahalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
201	Thalapallam	Tiruchirappalli	Rock Painting	--	New Discovery
202	Thalapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 31
203	Thattaparai	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
204	Thavasimalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 24-25
205	Thengunam	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
206	Thengur Marahada	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	White	Rajan 2013: 83
207	Thiyagadurgam	Kallakurichchi	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
208	Thondamanur	Tiruvannamalai	Engraving	--	New Discovery
209	Thrunjippattu	Kallakurichchi	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
210	Thumbarampattu	Kallakurichchi	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
211	Tirumalai	Sivagangai	Rock Painting	Red	Sridhar 2005: 47,48
212	Tirumalai	Tiruvannamalai	Rock Painting	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
213	Tirumalpadi	Ariyalur	Engraving	--	Rajan 2013: 83
214	Tirumayam	Pudukkottai	Rock Painting	Red	Arul Murugan (nd): 20-59

215	Tiruvadavur	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red	Yathees Kumar 2006, Subramaniyan 2022: 61
216	Tondur	Villupuram	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
217	Udayarnattam	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Rajan 2013: 83
218	Uliyampattu	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
219	Ulkkombai	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Yathees Kumar 2006
220	Upparapalli hill	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
221	Vagurani	Madurai	Rock Painting	Red, White	New Discovery
222	Vaikarisimalai (Vadakadu)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Black	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 25-26
223	Valaikaranpatti	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
224	Vanagapalam	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting		New Discovery
225	Vandiyoor	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 94,95
226	Varappalayam	Coimbatore	Rock Painting	White	Kanagarathinam 2011:181-184
227	Varasanadu Karupaiyapuram (Poochikal)	Theni	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 96
228	Varattanapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
229	Vayalur	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
230	Veerapandi	Villupuram	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery

231	Veersettipalli	Vellore	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
232	Velampatti	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
233	Vellerikombai	Coimbatore	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 37
234	Vellerukkanpalayam	Coimbatore	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 50
235	Vettavalam	Tiruvannamalai	Rock Painting	Red	Rajan 2013: 83
236	Vikkiramangalam	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Yathees Kumar 2006
237	Veerapandi	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	--	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
238	Vireyamarathuparai (Thattakulikkadu-Mungilalai)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	White, Black, Yellow	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 26-27
239	Yerpettu	The Nilgiris	Engraving	--	New Discovery

Appendix 1.2: Rock Art Sites (unidentified) in Tamil Nadu

S.No	Site	District	Pigment	Reference
1	Attakuddi	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
2	Chendrampatti	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
3	Dammalai	Krishnagiri	Red	Murugesan 2022: 66
4	Etrapalli - Melpallam	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
5	Kollapatti (Mudarayankundru	Dharmapuri	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
6	Kruthamarampatti (Sapparam)	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
7	Kurralapputai	Tirunelvali	-	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
8	Kusumaali near Krishnagiri	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
9	Melumalai	Krishnagiri	-	New Discovery
10	Narasimmasamithittai	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
11	Nayakaneri	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
12	Padethalav	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
13	Paikkal	Kotthagiri	White	New Discovery
14	Palayapalayam	Tiruvannamalai	-	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
15	Panan parambu	Thenkasi	Black	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
16	Pothigaimalai	Tirunelveli	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
17	Purakkal (Kulicunai)	Villupuram	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
18	Salakkora	Nilgiri	White	New Discovery
19	Sandavalamkuttai	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
20	Sayarbhasamalai	Dharmapuri	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
21	Selapsanampatti	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
22	Simplethiradi	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
23	Somasundaram	Villupuram	-	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
24	Sundasingam	Nilgiri	White	New Discovery
25	Tatta kuzhikadu	Kodaikanal	Red, White	New Discovery
26	Tattakal	Dharmapuri	-	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
27	Thegapalli	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
28	Tinkanagar	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
29	Vairangal malai	Vellore	White	New Discovery
30	Velampatti	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 68

Appendix 1.3: Rock Painting Sites in Tamil Nadu

S.No	Site	District	Pigment	Reference
1	Alagarmalai	Madurai	Red	Bharathi 2023: 111-114
2	Alaikkallu (Kozhiuthu)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White, Black	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 18
3	Alambadi	Villupuram	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 21
4	Alangayam	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	White	Sridhar 2005: 53,54
5	Alankuppam	Vellore	White	New Discovery
6	Aliyabadpalayam	Kallakurichchi	Red	New Discovery
7	Aliyar	Coimbatore	White	Joseph Thomas 2014 & 2015
8	Aluruttimalai (Ammachattram)	Pudukkottai	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 148-150
9	Amaravathi nagar	Tiruppur	Red, White, Black	New Discovery
10	Anaigundu	Vellore	White	New Discovery
11	Anaipatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red	Rajan 2013: 80
12	Andimalai	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
13	Anjukulipatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	Bharathi 2023: 50-53
14	Appukkal	Vellore	White	Rajan 2013: 80
15	Arugaveli	Theni	White	Bharathi 2023: 76-80
16	Attukaranpatti	Tiruchirappalli	Red	Bharathi 2023: 152
17	C.Gettur	Krishnagiri	Red, White	Subramaniyan 2022: 59
18	Chandrapuram	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 55

19	Chatrapatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White, Black	Bharathi 2023: 54-57; Kumaran et.al., 2022: 19
20	Chennarayan palli	Vellore	White	Sridhar 2005: 52,53
21	Chinna Kandilii	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	white	New Discovery
22	Chinnabellarampalli	Krishnagiri	Black, White	Murugesan 2022: 66
23	Chinna-Damal-Cheruvu	Vellore	white	New Discovery
24	Chinnapalayam-Pakkam	Krishnagiri	White	New Discovery
25	Chokkarishi-Kuppam (Molugungundu)	Vellore	White	New Discovery
26	Cholavaram	Krishnagiri	White	New Discovery
27	Desupalli	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
28	Devankurichimalai	Madurai	White	Bharathi 2023: 125
29	Devarmalai	Pudukkottai	Red	Bharathi 2023: 142,143
30	Devarmukkulam	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
31	Echampattu	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	White	New Discovery
32	Elayanegaram	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	White	New Discovery
33	Emakathapuram	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20
34	Erasakkanayakanur (Perumalmalai)	Theni	White	Bharathi 2023: 93
35	Eriyur	Dharmapuri		New Discovery
36	Erthangal	Vellore	White	Subramaniyan 2022: 57,58

37	Gangaleri	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
38	Gangavaram	Krishnagiri		Murugesan 2022: 66
39	Gittapalli	Vellore	White	New Discovery
40	Gollapalli	Krishnagiri	White	New Discovery
41	Gulamdarkka	Kallakurichchi	Red	New Discovery
42	I. Kunthapalli	Krishnagiri	Red, White	Murugesan 2022: 66
43	Iduhatti	The Nilgiris	White	Sridhar 2005: 34
44	Jagadevipalayam	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
45	K.Mottur	Vellore	White	New Discovery
46	Kadattikuttai	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
47	Kalpudavu-Murukkodai	Theni	Red	Bharathi 2023: 81-82
48	Kamalapuram	Vellore	White	New Discovery
49	KamayaKundanpatti	Theni	White	Sridhar 2005: 39
50	Kandli	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	White	New Discovery
51	Karadikootam	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	Bharathi 2023: 69-70
52	Karadippatti	Madurai	Red, White	Information provided by Yathees Kumar
53	Karagur	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
54	Karikkiyur	The Nilgiris	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 35,36
55	Karkur	Vellore	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
56	Karungalakudi	Madurai	Red	Sridhar 2005: 42

57	Karuvelampatti (Vekiruttu-alai)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20
58	Keelavalavu	Madurai	Red, Yellow	Bharathi 2023: 99,100
59	Kidaripatti	Madurai	Red	Sridhar 2005: 41
60	Kilakuyilkudi	Madurai	White	Bharathi 2023: 115,116
61	Kilvalai	Villupuram	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 15-18
62	Kodandur	Tiruppur	Red, White	New Discovery
63	Kollur	Villupuram	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 24
64	Kombaikkadu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red	Bharathi 2023: 59-61
65	Kombapatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	New Discovery
66	Konavakkarai	The Nilgiris	White	Sridhar 2005: 33
67	Kongarpuliyankulam	Madurai	White	Bharathi 2023: 106-108
68	Kothakuppam	Vellore	White	New Discovery
69	Kothamarikuppam	Vellore	White	New Discovery
70	Kottamitta	Vellore	White	New Discovery
71	Kottaramadugu	Vellore	White	New Discovery
72	Kottotaipatti	Theni	Nil	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
73	Kovanur	Coimbatore	White	Bharathi 2023: 28-31
74	Kudumipatti	Vellore	White	New Discovery
75	Kudumiyanmalai hill	Pudukkottai	Red, Black	Arul Murugan (nd): 81-89
76	Kuliratti (Chaduragiri)	Madurai	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
77	Kumbavarai	The Nilgiris	White	New Discovery
78	Kumuttipati	Coimbatore	White	Sridhar 2005: 51

79	Kurinchi Nagar(Vasimalai)	Madurai	White	Bharathi 2023: 199-122
80	Kuruvikarankottai	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
81	Kuruvi-Nayanapalli	Krishnagiri	White	Sridhar 2005: 29
82	Kuttalatti	Krishnagiri	Nil	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
83	Lakshmi Ammal puram	Vellore	White	New Discovery
84	Lingundram	Vellore	White	New Discovery
85	Maharajakadai	Krishnagiri	White	Sridhar 2005: 27,28
86	Mahimandalam hill	Vellore	White	New Discovery
87	Mailadumparai-Mayavarmalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 64-68
88	Malaipatti	Virudhunagar	White	New Discovery
89	Malaiyadipatti	Pudukkottai	White	Bharathi 2023: 151
90	Malayampattu	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	White	New Discovery
91	Mallachandiram	Krishnagiri	White	Sridhar 2005: 28,29
92	Mallaiyapuram	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20-21
93	Mallapadi	Krishnagiri	White	Sridhar 2005: 26,27
94	Malttampatti	Krishnagiri		Dayalan 2003: 134-157
95	Masinakudi	The Nilgiris	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
96	Mathakadiputhur	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	New Discovery
97	Mavadaippu	Tiruppur	White	New Discovery
98	Mayiladumparai	Krishnagiri	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 29,30
99	Mealpatti	Krishnagiri	White	New Discovery

100	Meenakshipuram, Aambalkudimalai	Virudhunagar	White	Bharathi 2023: 137
101	Meenur	Vellore	White	New Discovery
102	Mekalachinnampalli	Krishnagiri	White	New Discovery
103	Melakuppam	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	White	New Discovery
104	Melur	Madurai	Red	Bharathi 2023: 132
105	Mettuppatti	Madurai	White	New Discovery
106	Modikuppam	Tiruvannamalai	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
107	Moongilpudur	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
108	Morasapalli	Vellore	White	New Discovery
109	Mudippinayanapalli	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
110	Mullakollai	Vellore		New Discovery
111	Mullakuttai (Narimedu)	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
112	Munandippatti	Madurai	Red, White	Yathees Kumar 2006
113	Mungappattu	Vellore	White	New Discovery
114	Mungilgudikkadu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20-21
115	Murugamalai	Theni	White	Bharathi 2023: 97,98
116	Muttupatti	Madurai	White	Sridhar 2005: 40
117	Muttupatti	Madurai	Red	Bharathi 2023: 117
118	Nadumuthalaikulam	Madurai	White	Bharathi 2023: 118
119	Nagal	Vellore	White	New Discovery
120	Nainavaraialai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 22
121	Nalanganallur	Pernambut (Pernampattu)	White	New Discovery

122	Namalaigundu (Chokkarishikuppam)	Vellore	White	New Discovery
123	Nayanur	Villupuram	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157,Sridhar 2005: 22
124	Neganurpatti	Villupuram	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
125	Nelkuttipali	Dindigul (Dindukkal)		New Discovery
126	Nelpalialai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Black, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 22-23
127	Netterimalai	Vellore	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
128	Oppathavadi	Krishnagiri	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 30
129	Oramanagunda	Krishnagiri	White	Subramaniyan 2022: 36,37
130	Othikuppam	Krishnagiri	White	Sridhar 2005: 30
131	Othiyattur	Salem	Red	Joseph Thomas, 2014 & 2015
132	Ovamalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 24
133	Pachiganapalli	Dharmapuri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
134	Pachur	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
135	Padiyandal	Kallakurichchi	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 23
136	Paiyampalli	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
137	Paiyur	Krishnagiri	White	New Discovery
138	Pakkam	Villupuram	White	New Discovery
139	Pakkialai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 22
140	Palarupatti	Theni	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157

141	Pandiyanparai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	Saranya
142	Panniyur	Tiruvannamalai	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
143	Paravaikkal	Vellore	White	New Discovery
144	Pazhaiyapettai	Krishnagiri	White	New Discovery
145	Penneshwaramadam	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
146	Periyaduraikombai	Palani	White	Kumarn, Saranya and Murugan 2022:17-30
147	Periyakottapalli	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
148	Pogalur	Vellore	White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
149	Poonkulam	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	White	New Discovery
150	Poraiyur	Kallakurichchi	Red	New Discovery
151	Pulipatti	Madurai	Red	Bharathi 2023: 133
152	Puthur hill	Madurai	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 102-105
153	Ragunathapuram	Kallakurichchi	Red, Yellow	New Discovery
154	Rajakuppam	Vellore	White	New Discovery
155	Ramarajapuram	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 24
156	Rathinagiri hill	Ranipet (Ranipettai)	White	Subramaniyan 2022: 57
158	Samarishi Kuppam	Vellore	White	New Discovery
157	Sangaranmalaipatti	Karur		Dayalan 2003: 134-157
159	Sanjeevi hill	Virudhunagar	White	Bharathi 2023: 138
160	Sathgur	Vellore		New Discovery
161	Sempalli	Vellore	White	New Discovery

162	Sendathur	Vellore	White	New Discovery
163	Settavarai	Villupuram	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 19,20
164	Seykundram	Vellore	White	New Discovery
165	Sikur	The Nilgiris	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 34,35
166	Sirumalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 44,45
167	Sirunagalur	Kallakurichchi	Red, White	New Discovery
168	Sirupakkam	Kallakurichchi	Red	New Discovery
169	Sitharevu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White	Bharathi 2023: 71
170	Sittanavasal	Pudukkottai	Red, Yellow	Arul Murugan (nd): 60-80
171	Sivanathapuram	Vellore	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
172	Sundarajapuram Samiyarpudavu	Theni	Red, White	Bharathi 2023: 83-83
173	Sundekuppam	Krishnagiri	Red, White	Murugesan 2022: 67
174	Tatrahalli	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
175	Thalapallam	Tiruchirappalli		New Discovery
176	Thalapalli	Krishnagiri	White	Sridhar 2005: 31
177	Thattaparai	Vellore	White	New Discovery
178	Thavasimalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Red	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 24-25
179	Thengunam	Kallakurichchi	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
180	Thengur Marahada	The Nilgiris	White	Rajan 2013: 83
181	Tirumalai	Sivagangai	Red	Sridhar 2005: 47,48

182	Tirumalai	Tiruvannamalai	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
183	Tirumayam	Pudukkottai	Red	Arul Murugan (nd): 20-59
184	Tiruvadavur	Madurai	Red	Yathees Kumar 2006, Subramaniyan 2022: 61
185	Tondur	Villupuram	White	New Discovery
186	Udayarnattam	Villupuram	Red, White	Rajan 2013: 83
187	Ulkkombai	Theni	White	Yathees Kumar 2006
188	Upparapalli hill	Vellore	White	New Discovery
189	Vagurani	Madurai	Red, White	New Discovery
190	Vaikarisimalai (Vadakadu)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Black	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 25-26
191	Valaikaranpatti	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
192	Vanagapalam	The Nilgiris		New Discovery
193	Vandiyoor	Theni	White	Bharathi 2023: 94,95
194	Varappalayam	Coimbatore	White	Kanagarathinam 2011: 181-184
195	Varasanadu Karupaiyapuram (Poochikal)	Theni	White	Bharathi 2023: 96
196	Varattanapalli	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
197	Veerapandi	Villupuram	White	New Discovery
198	Veersettipalli	Vellore	White	New Discovery
199	Velampatti	Krishnagiri	White	Murugesan 2022: 68

200	Vellerikombai	Coimbatore	White	Sridhar 2005: 37
201	Vellerukkanpalayam	Coimbatore	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 50
202	Vettavalam	Tiruvannamalai	Red	Rajan 2013: 83
203	Vikkiramangalam	Madurai	White	Yathees Kumar 2006
204	Vireyamarathuparai (Thattakulikkadu-Mungilalai)	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	White, Black, Yellow	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 26-27

Appendix 1.4: Rock engravings (petroglyphs) in Tamil Nadu

S.No	Site	District	Reference
1	Athithangal	Ranipet (Ranipettai)	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
2	Chennarayan palli	Vellore	Sridhar 2005: 52,53
3	Chinna Kandilii	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	New Discovery
4	Kothaiyurumbu	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Kumaran et.al., 2022: 20
5	Mahimandalam hill	Vellore	New Discovery
6	Mayiladumparai-Mayavarmalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Bharathi 2023: 64-68
7	Nallanpillaiperral	Villupuram	New Discovery
8	Perumukkal	Villupuram	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
9	Thondamanur	Tiruvannamalai	New Discovery
10	Tirumalpadi	Ariyalur	Rajan 2013: 83

Appendix 1.5: Neolithic Grooves Sites in Tamil Nadu				
S.No	**Site**	**District**	**Rock Art**	**Reference**
1	Andipatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Neolithic Grooves	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
2	Arasalapuram	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
3	Kallpattu	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
4	Kappai	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
5	Keelanur	Tiruppattur	Neolithic Grooves	Ramesh 2019:79-87
6	Keelanamandi	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
7	Kundalapuliyur	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
8	Kundukottai (Attipallam falls)	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
9	Mayiladumparai	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Grooves	Sridhar 2005: 29,30
10	Melkupsanavur	Vellore	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
11	Melnukiyur (Bikkanappalli)	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai

12	Melpattu	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
13	Mittapalli	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
14	Muluvi	Salem	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
15	Nachammalai	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
16	Nallanpillaiperral	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	New Discovery
17	Nallapalayam	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
18	Nanthankalvai	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
19	Narayanapuram	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	New Discovery
20	Neivanattam	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
21	Nelvai	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
22	Padippallam	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
23	Pakkam	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	New Discovery

24	Pathiri	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
25	Perumuttam	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
26	Serpakkam	Kancheepuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
27	Thiyagadurgam	Kallakurichchi	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
28	Thurunjippattu	Kallakurichchi	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
29	Thumbarampattu	Kallakurichchi	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
30	Uliyampattu	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
31	Vayalur	Tiruvannamalai	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai
32	Veerapandi	Villupuram	Neolithic Grooves	Information provided by Palanisamy, Thiruvannamalai

Appendix 1.6 List of documented rock art sites in Tamil Nadu

S.No	Site	District	Rock Art	Pigment	Reference
1	Alambadi	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 21
2	Aliyabadpalayam	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
3	Amaravathi Nagar	Tiruppur	Rock Painting	Red, White, Black	New Discovery
4	Andimalai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
5	Andipatti	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Neolithic Grooves	--	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
6	Attumalai	Tiruppur	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
7	C.Gettur	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Red, White	Subramaniyan 2022: 59
8	Gangaleri	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
9	Gulamdarkka	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
10	I. Kothapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Red, White	Murugesan 2022: 66
11	Jagadevipalayam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 66
12	Karikkiyur	The Nilgiris	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 35-36
13	Kilvalai	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 15-18
14	Kodandur	Tiruppur	Rock Painting	Red, White	New Discovery
15	Kurinji Nagar (Vasimalai)	Madurai	Rock Painting	White	Bharathi 2023: 199-122

16	Kuruvikarankottai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
17	Mallachandiram	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 28,29
18	Mallapadi	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 26,27
19	Mathakadiputhur	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	New Discovery
20	Mayiladumparai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting, Neolithic Grooves	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 29,30
21	Mealpatti	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
22	Mekalachinnampalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
23	Nayanur	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157, Sridhar 2005: 22
24	Oppathavadi	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 30
25	Oramanagunda	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Subramaniyan 2022: 36-37
26	Othikuppam	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 30
27	Padiyandal	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 23
28	Paiyampalli	Tirupathur (Tiruppattur)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
29	Paiyur	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
30	Pakkam	Villupuram	Rock Painting, Neolithic Grooves	White	New Discovery
31	Panniyur	Tiruvannamalai	Rock Painting	Red	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
32	Pazhaiyapettai	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery

33	Periyakottapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 67
34	Perumukkal	Villupuram	Engraving	--	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
35	Poraiyur	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
36	Ragunathapuram	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, Yellow	New Discovery
37	Settavarai	Villupuram	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 19,20
38	Sirumalai	Dindigul (Dindukkal)	Rock Painting	Red, White	Sridhar 2005: 44-45
39	Sirunagalur	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, White	New Discovery
40	Sirupakkam	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red	New Discovery
41	Thalapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Sridhar 2005: 31
42	Thengunam	Kallakurichchi	Rock Painting	Red, White	Dayalan 2003: 134-157
43	Valaikaranpatti	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
44	Varattanapalli	Krishnagiri	Rock Painting	White	Murugesan 2022: 68
45	Veerapandi	Villupuram	Rock Painting	White	New Discovery
46	Vettavalam	Tiruvannamalai	Rock Painting	Red	Rajan 2013: 83

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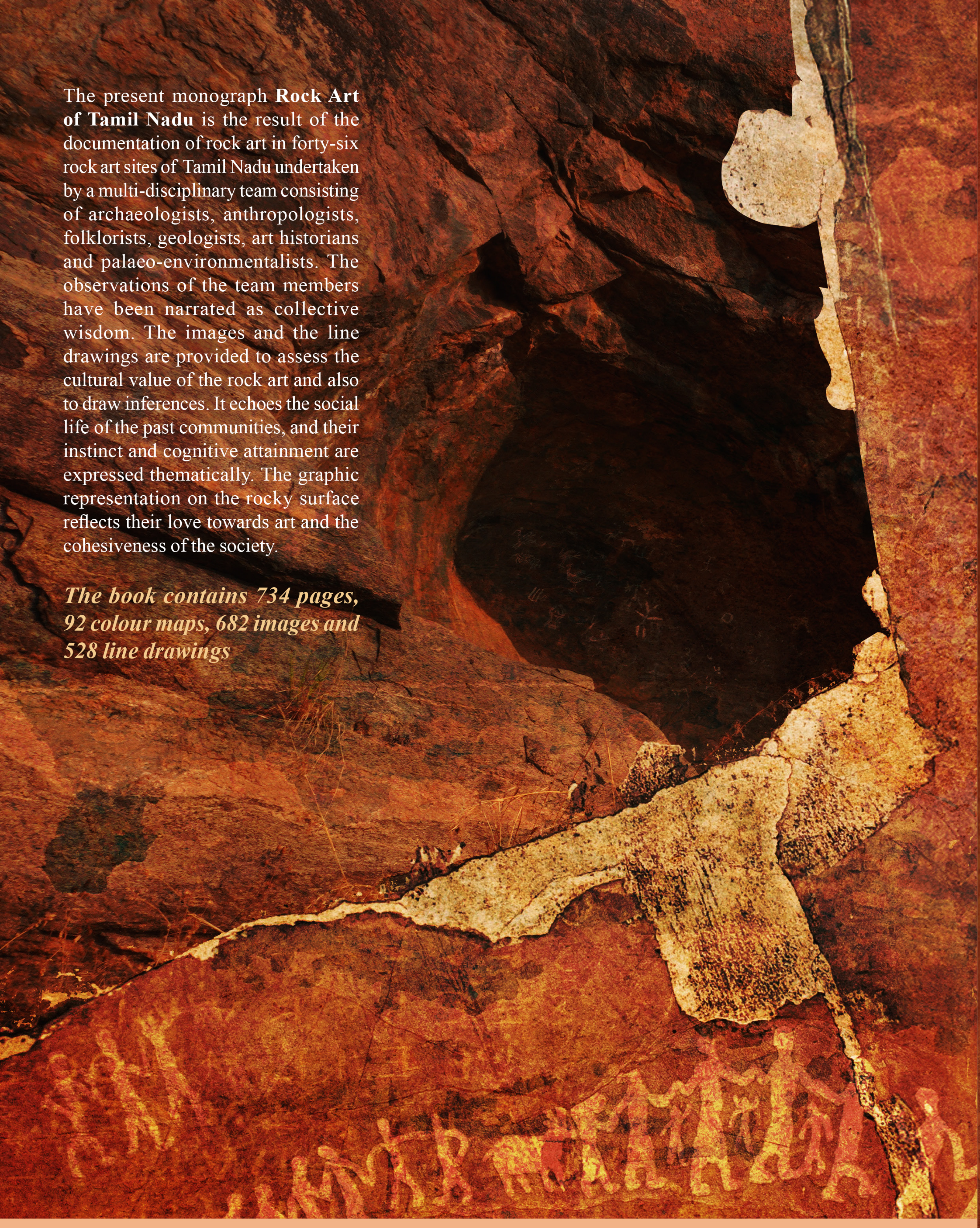

The present monograph **Rock Art of Tamil Nadu** is the result of the documentation of rock art in forty-six rock art sites of Tamil Nadu undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team consisting of archaeologists, anthropologists, folklorists, geologists, art historians and palaeo-environmentalists. The observations of the team members have been narrated as collective wisdom. The images and the line drawings are provided to assess the cultural value of the rock art and also to draw inferences. It echoes the social life of the past communities, and their instinct and cognitive attainment are expressed thematically. The graphic representation on the rocky surface reflects their love towards art and the cohesiveness of the society.

The book contains 734 pages, 92 colour maps, 682 images and 528 line drawings

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